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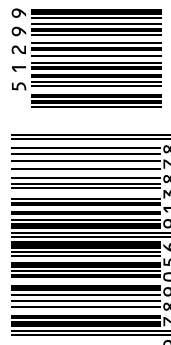
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Standing
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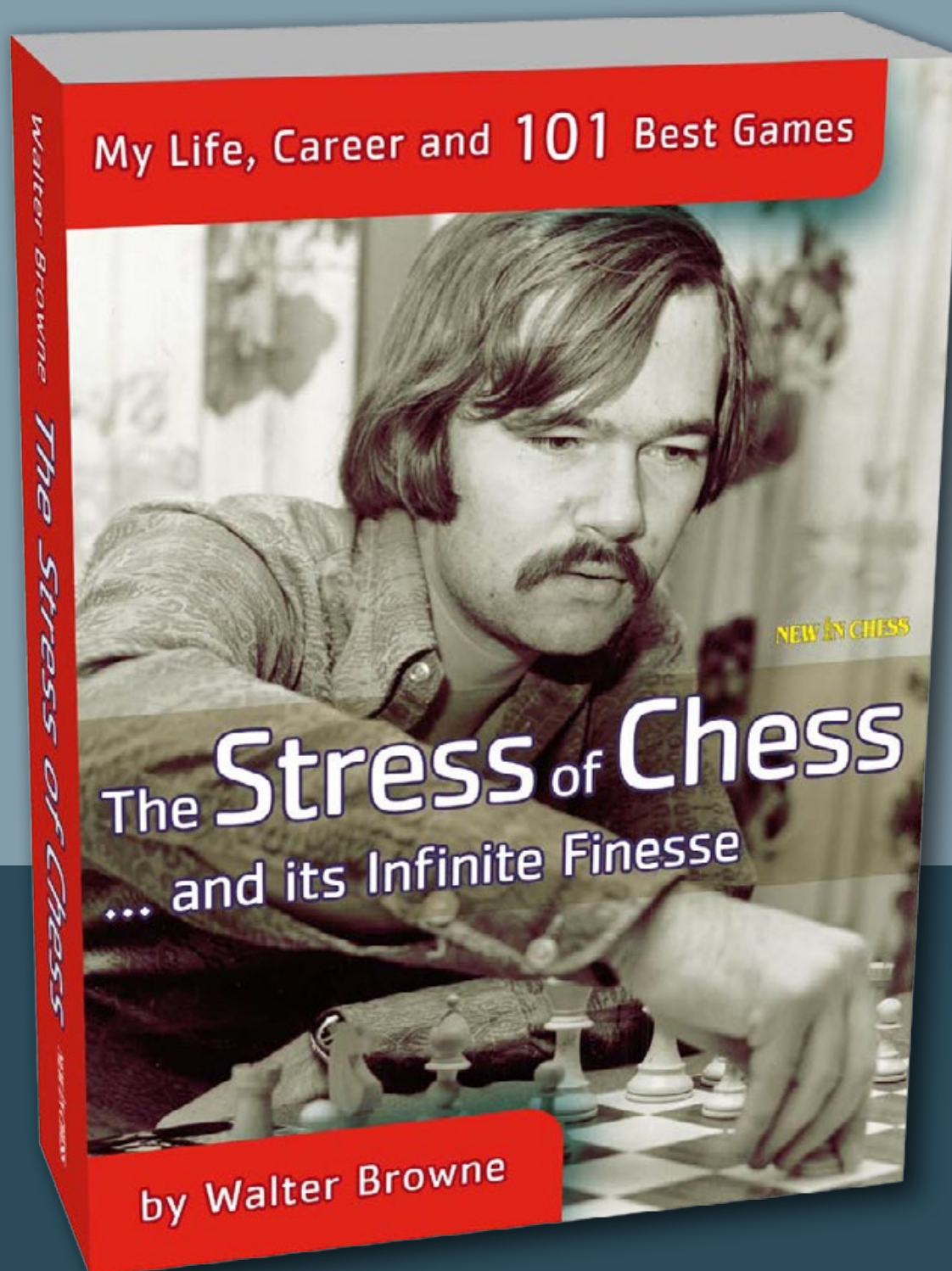
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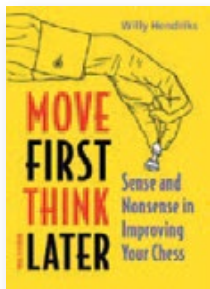


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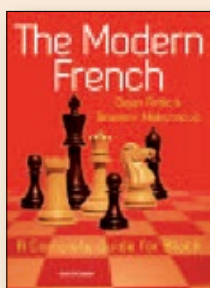


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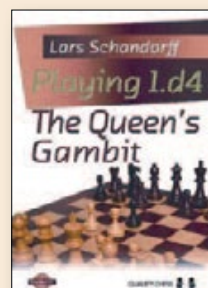


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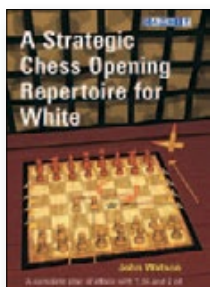


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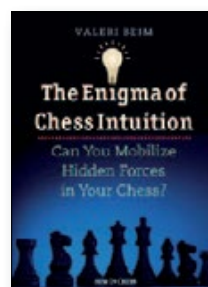


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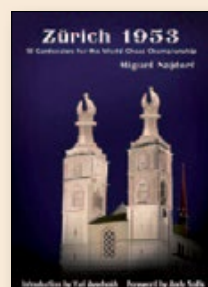


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Tal Memorial



Interview



Prague



Astana

'I get much more pleasure now than some time ago. I was always trying to produce some fantastic result and that somehow overshadowed my play. Somehow I feel calmer. Maybe it's a matter of age; I have turned 25. They say that after that you get older every year.' – Teimour Radjabov



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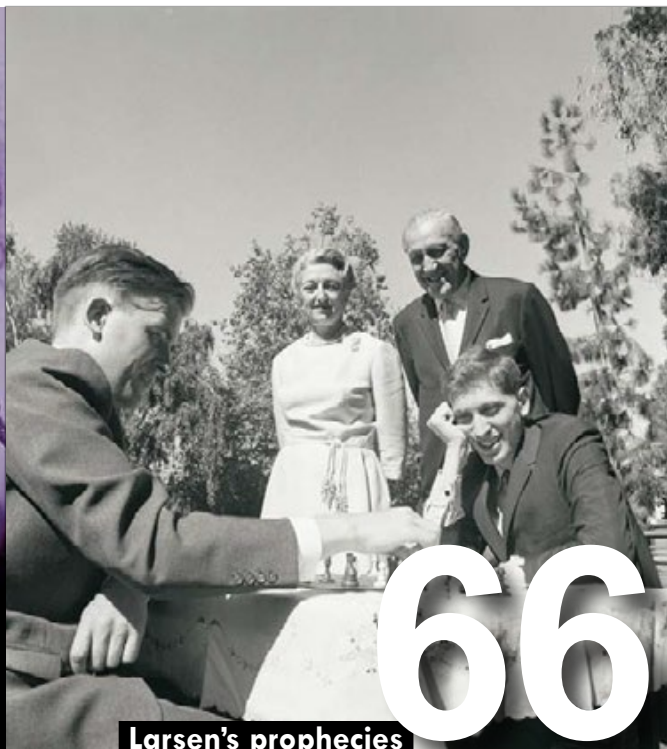
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You cannot learn much about chess if you only rely on Informant symbols (+-, !?) or computer assessments (+2.31, -1.08), argues Mihail Marin, underpinning his conviction with a fascinating analysis of Fischer-Larsen, Santa Monica 1966.

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The fourth leg of the FIDE Women Grand Prix in the capital of the Russian Republic of Tatarstan ended in a shared win for the only two players that remained undefeated, Humpy Koneru from India and Anna Muzychuk from Slovenia.

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CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

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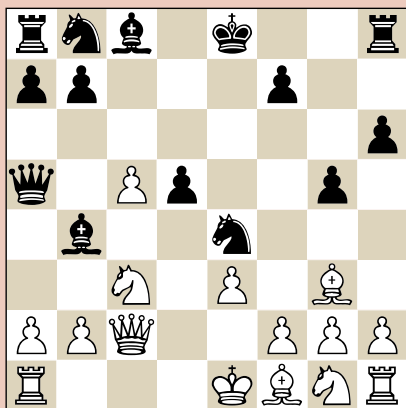
COVER PHOTO

Magnus Carlsen: New In Chess



Didn't I say so?

Chess is a difficult game, as if you didn't know so already. How can you prepare adequately when there is so much information on offer? A popular opening book among club players is *The Kaufman Repertoire for Black and White* in which American GM Larry Kaufman offers a manageable armoury of original ideas in main lines, based on top-level practice and computer analysis. That the relevance of the book is not restricted to club players was shown in the second round of the Tal Memorial, when Alexander Morozevich almost beat Magnus Carlsen with one of Kaufman's ideas. After **1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗c3 ♙b4 4.♔c2 d5 5.cxd5 exd5 6.♙g5 h6 7.♙h4 c5 8.dxc5 g5 9.♙g3 ♗e4 10.e3 ♔a5**



Morozevich didn't go for the standard 11.♗e2, but played: **11.♔c1**, described by Kaufman as 'a rare but promising gambit'. How promising, Carlsen found out when he immediately went astray with a move Kaufman warns against: **11...♗d7?** 'Just a blunder', said Morozevich at the press conference. 'Just an awful move' – Carlsen. **12.♗e2 ♗dxc5** Only now did Carlsen notice that after the planned 12...♔xa2 White has the devilish 13.♙d1!, when after the more or less forced 13...♙xc3 14.♗xc3 ♗xc3+ 15.♔xc3 0-0 16.h4 Black's position is terrible. **13.a3 ♙xc3+ 14.♗xc3 ♗xc3 15.♔xc3 ♔xc3+ 16.♔xc3 ♗e4 17.♔c7 ♗xg3 18.hxg3** and in this precarious position Carlsen had to fight for

a draw, which he managed to achieve after 59 moves.

Knew when to hold 'em

Among the best evidence for the difficulty of chess is the surprising frequency of short losses by grandmasters. Even sharp minds that have studied the secrets of the game for decades, and have put in their 10,000 hours of practice even more than



Inspired by Kenny Rogers: World Open winner Ivan Sokolov.

once, remain capable of losing a game before they have made 25 moves. Or even 19, as happened in the encounter that decided on the winner of the 2012 World Open in Philadelphia.

That game was an Armageddon game between Ivan Sokolov and Alex Shabalov, who after nine rounds topped the standings with 7 points from 9 games. Or rather nine rounds, in Sokolov's case. Loath to play two rounds a day in the final weekend ('In Europe we don't do this'), the Dutch GM took byes in Rounds 6 and 8, and explained his success by this wise decision, happily citing Kenny Rogers' song *The Gambler*: 'You got to know when to hold 'em, know when to fold 'em, Know when to walk away and know when to run.'

For the Armageddon game Shabalov won the toss and chose Black and draw odds, with White having five minutes against his three. They played with the 'Bronstein increment', which means that the clock only starts to run

after five seconds. As a result you don't inexorably go down to zero seconds, but you cannot accumulate time as you can in Fischer mode.

Both players took home \$12,673.50, first and second prize split into two. By winning the Armageddon play-off Sokolov earned a \$253 bonus and the 2012 World Open title.

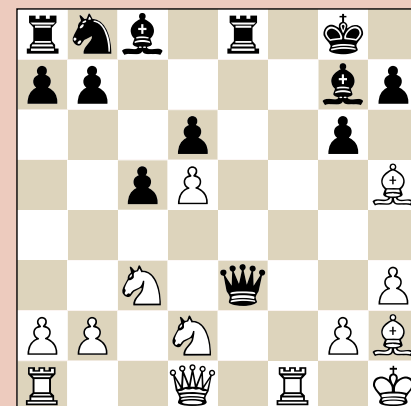
Bl 8.2 – A61

Ivan Sokolov

Alexander Shabalov

Philadelphia 2012 (Armageddon)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 c5 Despite the draw odds, Shabalov goes for a sharp battle. **3.d5 e6 4.♗c3 exd5 5.cxd5 d6 6.♗f3 g6 7.h3 ♙g7 8.♙f4 0-0 9.e3 ♔e8 10.♗d2 ♗h5** But this move, combined with the next pawn push, proves too sharp. **11.♙h2 f5 12.♙e2 f4 13.0-0! fxe3 14.fxe3 ♔g5 15.♙xh5 ♔xe3+ 16.♙h1**



Sixteen moves underway and Black's position is in tatters. **16...gxh5 17.♗c4 ♔h6 18.♗xd6 ♔d8 19.♗f7** Black resigned.

Putin says: Ask Boris!

In our previous issue we wrote about the visit that Vishy Anand and Boris Gelfand paid to Russian president Vladimir Putin at the end of the World Championship match in Moscow. It is always difficult to assess the significance of such meetings. From their reactions it was clear that the chess players felt honoured, but what did Putin think? Was he cleverly briefed by his staff or was he genuinely interested in chess matters? Less than a month after the match the

Russian president was in Israel. In the reports of his 24-hour visit there was emphasis both on the improved relations between Russia and Israel, and on their continued difference of opinion about the Iranian nuclear programme. Officially, Russia is opposed to any preemptive Israeli attacks against Iran, but is that the whole truth? Not so if we are to believe what Putin apparently said off the record to his Israeli hosts. According to the Russian business daily *Kommersant*, Putin told Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Russia would not prevent an Israeli attack on Iran. Citing their source he allegedly said that they 'would not help and will not interfere'. However, Putin added that the Israelis should first consider what the change in power in Afghanistan and the ousting of Saddam Hussein in Iraq had brought. Would an attack on Iran improve the situation? And then he referred to the meeting



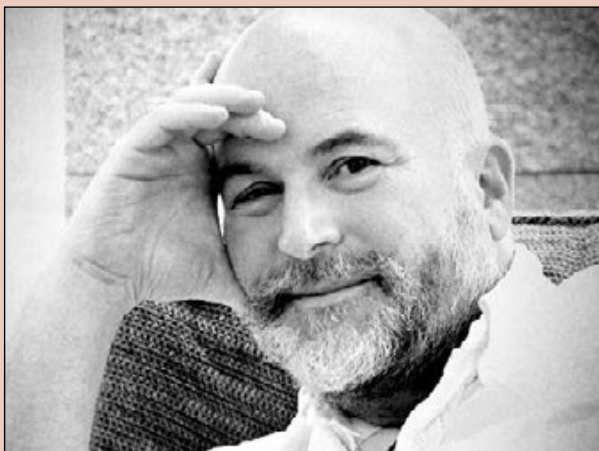
Clever politics. Russian president Putin seems to listen to Anand but is all ears for Gelfand's thoughts.

he had had with Gelfand in Moscow. Mentioning the Israeli GM's name and his talent to think several moves ahead, he suggested that maybe the Israeli politicians should do the same.

London Calling

In an interview on BBC radio Andrew Paulson revealed some of his ideas to turn chess into a spectator sport. One innovation will be 'an entirely new sort of concept of a cockpit' where the players will be surrounded by the audience. As he

laughingly stated: 'There'll be no escape and we'll watch the beads of sweat crawl down their foreheads.' Similar beads of sweat may have crawled down his own forehead when he worked on the final list of participants for the 2012/13 Grand Prix cycle which has



Andrew Paulson: 'We'll watch the beads of sweat crawl down their foreheads.'

now been published by FIDE and AGON. Most conspicuous are the names of the players who declined to take part: Magnus Carlsen, Levon Aronian, Vladimir Kramnik (the numbers 1-3 in the world rankings) and World Champion Vishy Anand. Of course the list of qualifiers and wild cards remains impressive, as (among others) the other six top-10 players do take part, but this cannot be the dream line-up Mr Paulson must have had in mind. No reason is given for the absence of the Fab Four of today's chess, but we guess that a lack of financial guarantees and doubts about the venues must have played a role. For next year GPs are announced in Lisbon, Madrid, Berlin and Paris. The first leg, which was supposed to start in Chelyabinsk on September 19, has been moved to London. When the Russian Chess Federation, puzzled by the absence of Russian wildcards, blocked the GP in Chelyabinsk, Paulson called Malcolm Pein, the organizer of the London Chess Classic, and they soon came to an agreement. That's good news! With the Classic in December and the Candidates' tournament next March there will be three major events in London in the space of seven months! ■

'Quote, Unquote

'World Chess estimates the potential global audience for the sport at more than one billion, with over 600 million chess players worldwide. (..)
World Chess has ample finance to fund the first cycle of the world chess championship, but it is expected that additional support will be secured from sponsors. The company is understood to be in talks with a number of businesses in the technology, media, financial and professional services sectors. Mr. Paulson said: "We are looking for six global sponsors in non-competing sectors." (..)

Research undertaken by YouGov has shown that chess is more associated with intelligence, sophistication and strategy than any other major global sport.'

From a press release of World Chess, a new venture by Andrew Paulson, who has bought the commercial rights of the World Championship from FIDE.

'When I first dove into the chess world, I felt incredibly comfortable with these people. It was like being back in college. These were passionate, eccentric, but deeply committed people. They see themselves as the keepers of the holy grail.'

Andrew Paulson in *The Guardian*

'EURO 2012. Liked Pirlo's penalty against England best so far! Wouldn't mind the final go to penalties. Tension ;) It's like playing Armageddon.'
Judit Polgar reveals her passion for football on *Twitter*

'Boston Celtics now are like Ivanchuk-Gelfand-Anand, everybody tells them that it's the time to retire, but they keep on fighting & winning!'

Levon Aronian reveals his passion for basketball and experience on *Twitter*.



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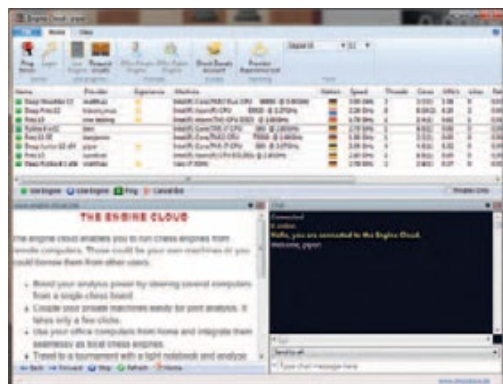
Deep Fritz 13

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DeepFritz13: 60% faster than Fritz13!

Chess programs have been high-performance utilities for a long time now. The higher your system performance, the greater the value they will be to you. But with multi-processor systems that only works if you have a "deep" version, because it is only then that the program can make use of several processor cores in order to calculate simultaneously. Things are no different with the new Deep Fritz 13, on a dual-core computer the engine is already approx. 60 % faster than "little" Fritz 13. And yet things are not the same as they always were with Deep Fritz 13.



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Deep Fritz 13 introduces the innovative "ChessBase Engine Cloud" and revolutionises the way we work with system resources. This new function makes it possible for the very first time to make use of engines backed up by the calculating power of other computers for your own analysis without in doing so overloading your own system. And that can be done in exactly the same way as if you were on your own computer: for deep position analysis, blunder search, engine matches etc. etc. It does not matter whether the engines are working on a table next to you in your study, on the office computer or in a computer centre in Australia.

High-end for everybody!

If you have several computers, link your engines and processing power on a single PC or propose your machine to other users via the "Cloud". This is an especially exciting development for owners of high-performance computers or clusters. The key point: hire processing power from a third party and turn your small laptop or your "old faithful" into a tactical giant and strategic monster at the click of a button!



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3. Save on expensive hardware.

Serious analysis requires powerful machines. These are expensive, take up a lot of space and depreciate quickly as they age. If when required you use processing power from the Cloud, then you are saving money.

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Screamingly Obvious

With much interest I read the article 'Sammy against the Soviets' by Taylor Kingston in *New In Chess* 2012/4. On page 66 he writes about a well-known episode from Zurich 1953. The Hungarian GM Laszlo Szabo (1917-1998) 'missed' with 30 minutes on his clock 'miraculously ... the screamingly obvious 21. ♔xg6+' with mate to follow.

My explanation as a historian is the following: Szabo saw the move, but refrained from executing it! As a Hungarian Jew Szabo had been in soviet imprisonment in 1943 as a forced labourer. After the soviet 'liberation' of Hungary in 1945 he experienced all the measures that they and the Communist Party took. In 1953 the Minister of the Interior, Imre Nagy (executed in 1958) started the anti-soviet 'New Course', which was at that time unsuccessful. And Szabo knew all the machinations by the soviet players and officials that are described in the article. So how could he give help in 1953, at this critical stage of the Cold War, to his Jewish opponent, who was then the chess hope of the West?

Thomas Bohn
Koblenz, Germany

Wintry Silence

Allow me to correct the esteemed essayist GM Hans Ree about the 1960 World Student Championship (*New In Chess* 2012/1, page 85). I participated on the winning team. Lombardy was not the team captain. That was USCF President Jerry Spann. And Lombardy's score was not a mere 6-1, but a colossal 12-1, playing every round and taking the board medal over Spassky.

As for the corrections of me, I endure them in Wintry silence.

Anthony Saidy
Los Angeles, CA, USA

A Record at the Time

It was fascinating to be taken down memory lane in Nigel Short's arti-

cle on weekenders in *New In Chess* 2012/3. In their post-Fischer, 1970s UK heyday, some of these events did indeed include large prize funds that have sadly long gone.

On a small point, the first prize in the first Bank of Dubai Open (July 1976, London) was actually £1,000 – a record at the time for weekenders.

Readers can send their opinions to:

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Letters may be edited or abridged

Nigel's article mentions a lower sum of '£700' for these Bank of Dubai events 'in the late 70s'.

That (1976) £1,000 is probably worth some 4-5 times more than that in real terms 'now'. I haven't, however, checked the relevant official UK price indices for a more precise multiple. As outright winner – having defeated Bojan Kurajica, with black, in the last round – I just pocketed the cash. I remember it well!

Craig Pritchett
Dunbar, United Kingdom

Anecdote

In the town of Niksic in Montenegro, two amateur chess players were drinking heavily in a coffee house that had several tables dedicated to chess. One of the chess players, who was also a locally renown poet, suddenly jumped on the table and started to recite his poetry with a bottle of wine in his hand, his arms swinging to the rhythm of the poem's verses. At one moment he lost his balance and fell under the table, while his bottle landed on someone's head before crashing on the floor. The owner called the police, who came and grabbed the one who was still calmly sitting and staring studiously

at the glass of wine in front of him. 'Not that one!' yelled the owner at the policemen, 'But the one under the table!' The poet, trying in vain to pull himself out from under the table, announced loudly, 'Piece touchée!'

Blazo Sredanovic
Menlo Park, CA, USA

Interesting & Knowledgeable

Many kudos in my opinion are due to the new magazine format. I believe it is a handsome magazine as well as well written with many photos. I have been a member since 1984, the year *New In Chess* began its voyage to become the top chess magazine in the world in my opinion.

One other thing, please keep GM Nigel Short on your staff as a contributing columnist, as I find him to be very interesting and knowledgeable.

Thank you for many hours of pleasure reading *New In Chess*.

Dominic Sciarretta
Clearwater, FL, USA

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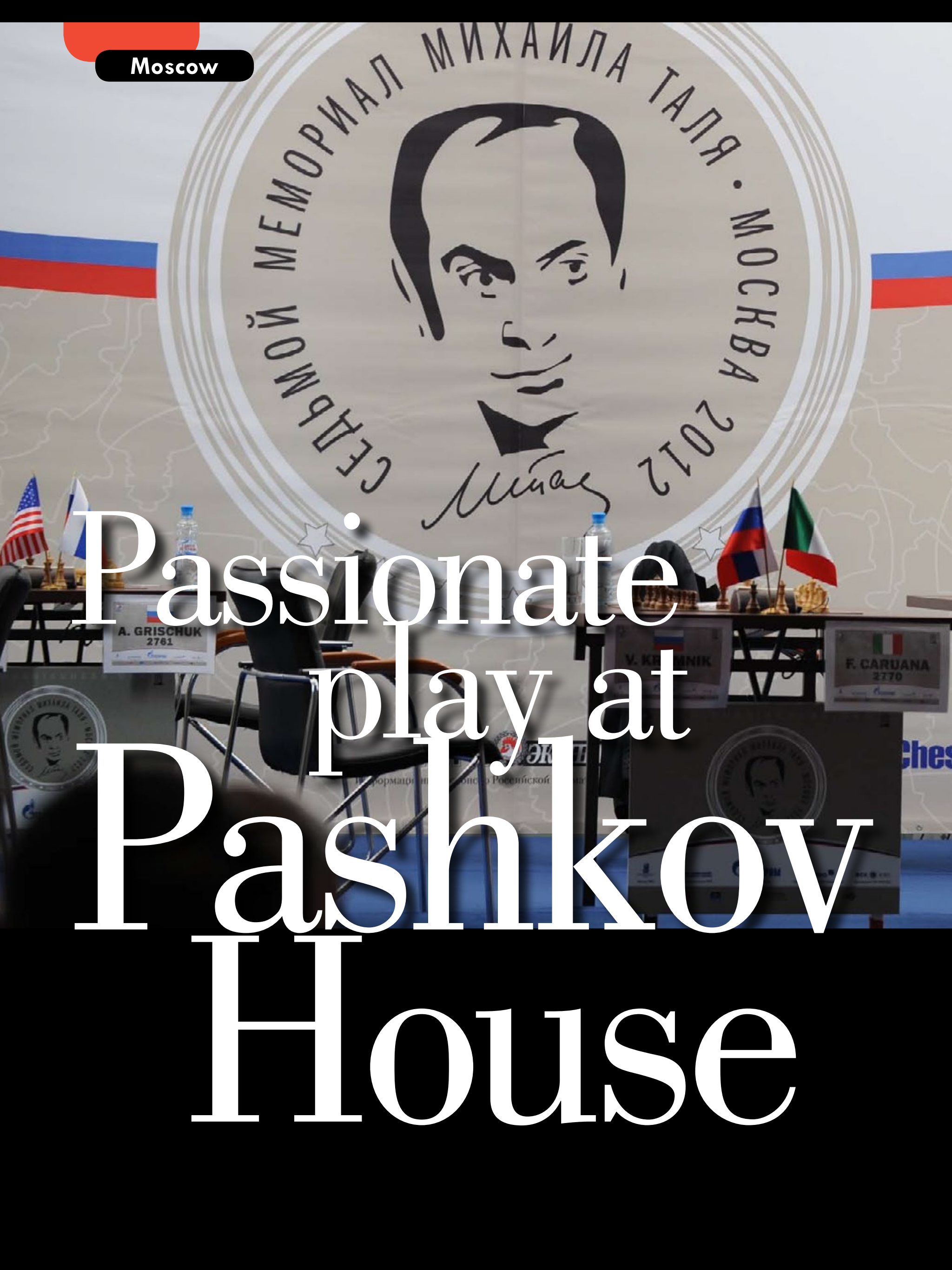
BORIS DOLMATOVSKY

Coming full circle

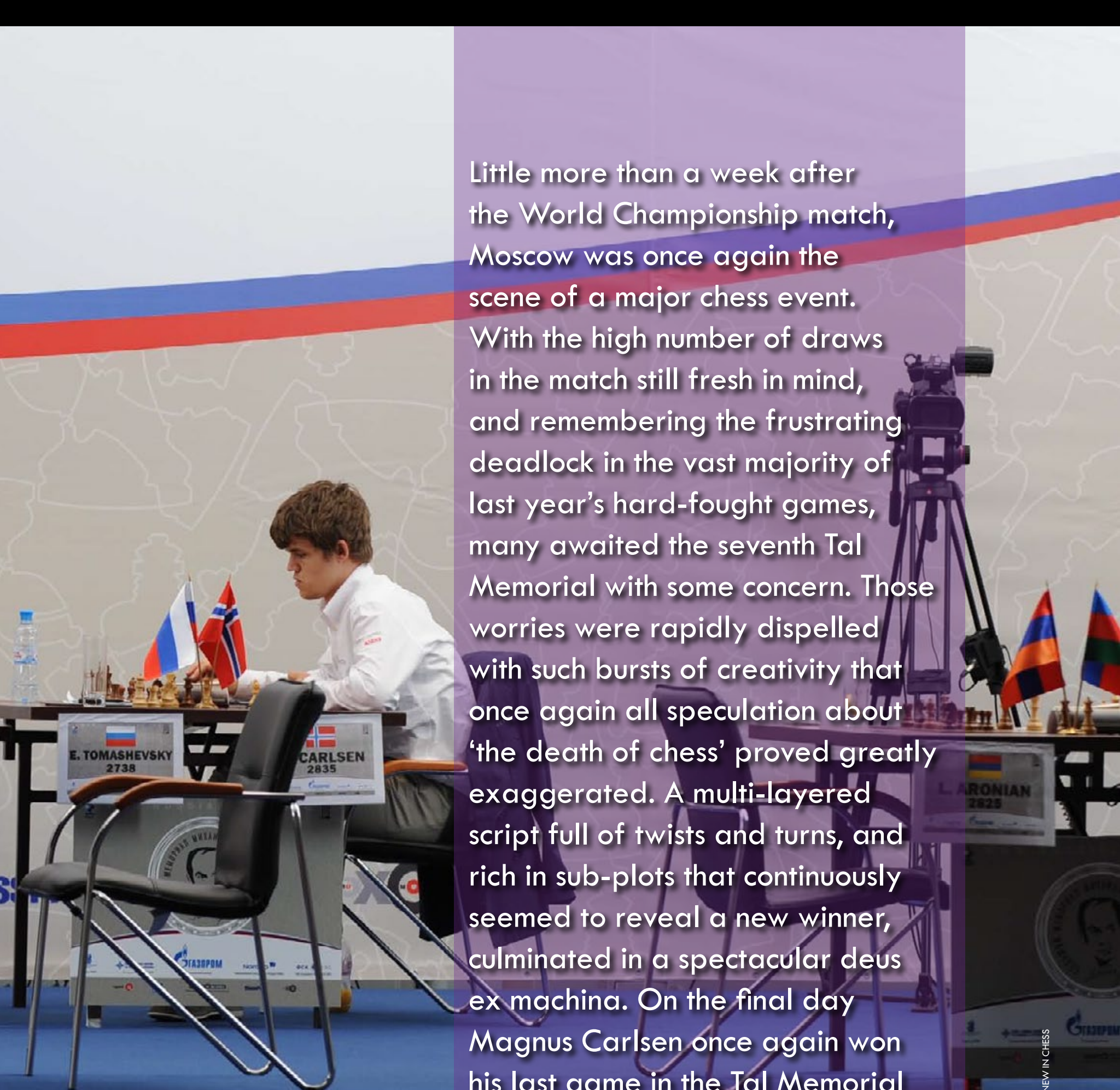


It's an iconic photo, taken in Hotel Sport in Moscow on February 15th, 1985. Garry Kasparov fulminates against the decision of FIDE President Florencio Campomanes (half hidden behind him) to stop the World Championship match against Anatoly Karpov (right) after 48 games. In his autobiography Kasparov called it 'the most memorable day in my life': 'My private struggles became public.' His struggles with FIDE continued. Two years ago he tried to end the presidency of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov by supporting his old rival Karpov. Now Kasparov has announced in an interview with *Frankfurter Allgemeine* that he is determined to oust the Kalmykian incumbent at the next elections in Tromsø, Norway, in 2014, either by supporting a candidate of his choice or, if need be, by running himself. In the formative years of his life in chess politics, Kasparov's slogan was: 'If not you, who else?' Will that be his slogan at the next FIDE presidential elections?

Moscow



Passionate play at Pashnikov House



Little more than a week after the World Championship match, Moscow was once again the scene of a major chess event. With the high number of draws in the match still fresh in mind, and remembering the frustrating deadlock in the vast majority of last year's hard-fought games, many awaited the seventh Tal Memorial with some concern. Those worries were rapidly dispelled with such bursts of creativity that once again all speculation about 'the death of chess' proved greatly exaggerated. A multi-layered script full of twists and turns, and rich in sub-plots that continuously seemed to reveal a new winner, culminated in a spectacular deus ex machina. On the final day Magnus Carlsen once again won his last game in the Tal Memorial with the black pieces and, like last year, claimed one of the most coveted trophies in professional chess.

On a deserted stage Magnus Carlsen is trying in vain to grind down Evgeny Tomashevsky. One day later the Norwegian clinched first place anyway with a last-round win against Luke McShane.

Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam

At the start of Round 8, the last round but one of the Tal Memorial, a bunch of giggling girls is sitting in the last row of the spectator section. Behind their chairs banners are lying on the floor. What is written on the banners is not yet visible, but it is no big secret who these supporters have come for. All three of them are wearing white shirts with the text 'Moro is the best' painted on them in big black letters. When the object of their admiration walks on stage and sits down at the board, the girls, together with a male friend, get up to pick up the banners and proudly hold them high. Amid fiery red hearts can be read in bold letters: 'Moro, we believe in you!' At the same time, other members of the audience wave sheets of paper on which the girls have printed the straightforward 'Moro'.

On stage, Alexander Morozevich shakes hands with his opponent Luke McShane and stoically looks at the board. It is hard to imagine that he has not seen his fans, but his face doesn't betray any surprise or approval. The girls' act has certainly not escaped McShane, who watches them with a broad grin.

Morozevich's reluctance to acknowledge this unusual expression of support may be understandable. After five rounds he was topping the table alone, thanks to three wins, including a brilliant effort with the black pieces against Aronian. Now he is struggling to get back on his feet again after two consecutive losses, against Nakamura and Tomashevsky, in the previous rounds.

For Luke McShane the unpredictable whims of fate and form that made this Tal Memorial so immensely enjoyable have worked the other way round. The Englishman had a disastrous start with two losses in the first rounds, but instead of totally collapsing he fought back with admirable composure and confirmed his class with an impressive win (with the black pieces!) over Aronian in Round 3. In Round 7 he accomplished another feat when in a titanic 94-move game he got the better of Vladimir Kramnik, who was in the shared lead after six rounds, before he, too, fell victim to the rough-and-tumble.

McShane was the winner of an Internet poll that determined the 10th participant in the Tal Memorial, an innovative attempt at audience par-

ticipation that raised an eyebrow here and there, and complaints from players who failed to qualify. To accept the invitation, McShane had to take a holiday, as these days he has a fulltime job in the City, a sacrifice 'the strongest amateur chess player in the world' happily made. What's more, on the insistence of his second Peter Wells, he even went so far as to take an extra day off the day before they travelled to Moscow!

McShane had no clear idea of who constituted his active fan base, and only found out about the poll when it was too late for him to vote himself. His guess was that his enterprising and daring play at the London Chess Classic had not gone unnoticed. If that was the reason, he certainly lived up to expectations. Much to the chagrin of Morozevich's fans, McShane remained true to his adventurous style in his eighth game to defeat another top-10 player with the black pieces (interesting statistics: last year only 10 out of 45 games saw a decision – of these, six ended in black victories; this time 21 games were decided – of these eight were won by Black).

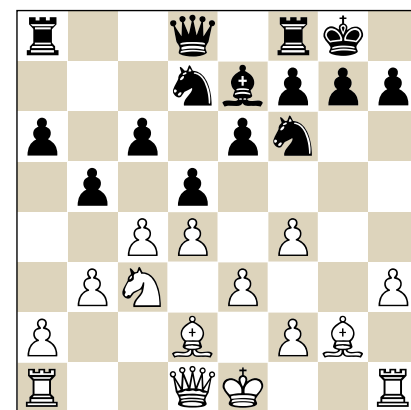
SL 3.1 – D15

Alexander Morozevich

Luke McShane

Moscow 2012 (8)

1.d4 d5 2.c4 c6 3.♘f3 ♘f6 4.♘c3 a6 5.e3 b5 6.b3 ♙g4 7.h3 ♙xf3 8.gxf3 ♘bd7 9.♙g2 e6 10.♙d2 ♙e7 11.f4 0-0



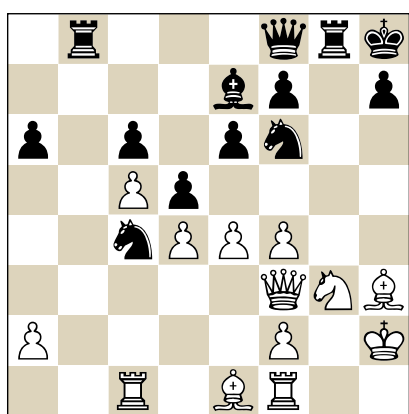
12.0-0 12.c5 would leave Black passive but solid. **12...bxc4** McShane would rather not be passive and al-



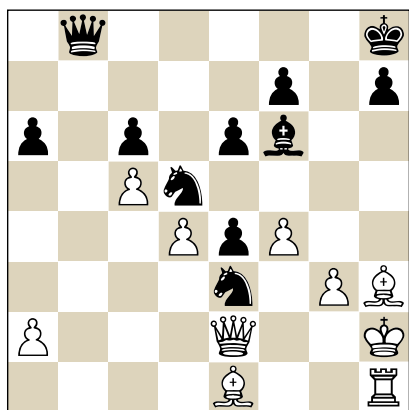
A rare sight at chess tournaments: supporters cheering on their favourite. Although Alexander Morozevich must have felt flattered, he didn't show it.

NEW IN CHESS

lows his queen's knight to come out. **13.bxc4** ♖b6 **14.c5** ♗c4 A double-edged decision, as the knight doesn't have any good retreating squares, but McShane felt that in combination with ...♖h8, ...♗g8 and ...g5 he should get enough counterplay. **15.** ♗e1 ♖h8 **16.** ♗e2 ♗g8 **17.** ♗g3 g5 **18.** ♗f3 Provocative play. Both 18.f5 and 18.fxg5 looked safer. **18...g4** **19.** hxg4 ♗xg4 **20.** ♗c1 ♗f8 The threat 21...♗h6 (a move that would also follow after the attempt to sacrifice an exchange with 21.♗xc4) cannot be ignored. **21.** ♗h3 ♗f6 **22.** ♖h2 ♗b8 Playing on two fronts. **23.e4**



23...♗xg3! Time to demonstrate his attacking skills. **24.fxg3** On 24. ♗xg3 McShane indicated 24...♗xe4 25. ♗d3 ♗h6 26. ♗xc4 ♗xf4+, and White can resign. **24...dxe4** **25.** ♗c3 ♗b2 Making maximum use of knight forks, and stronger, was 25... ♗h6 26. ♗h1 (26. ♗xc4 ♗g4+ 27. ♖g1 ♗xh3 is hopeless) 26... ♗e3 27. ♖g1 ♗fd5, with a great position for Black. **26.** ♗b1 ♗d5 **27.** ♗d2 ♗c4 **28.** ♗xb8 ♗xb8 **29.** ♗e2 ♗ce3 **30.** ♗h1 ♗f6

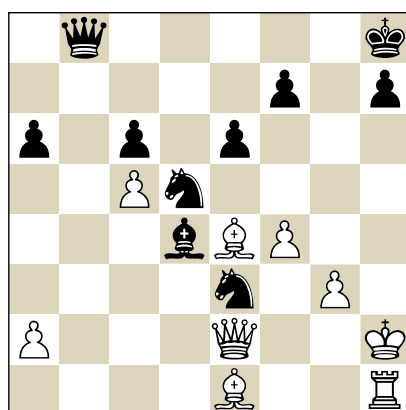


31. ♗g2 Combined with his next move this ends in disaster. He should

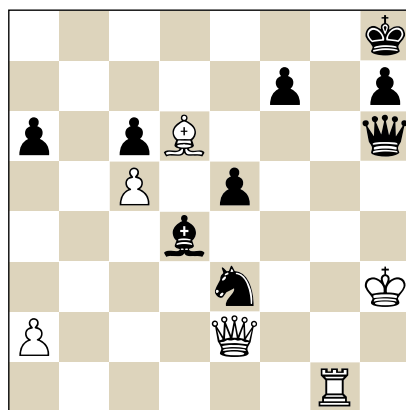


With an amused look, Luke McShane watches his opponent's fans. Their loyalty didn't stop the Englishman from beating Morozevich, his third top-10 victim in the Tal Memorial.

have tried 31. ♗f2 ♗xd4 32. ♗d1 ♗b4. **31...♗xd4** **32.** ♗xe4?



32...♗xf4! A devastating blow that essentially ends the game. **33.gxf4** ♗xf4+ **34.** ♗g3 ♗xe4 **35.** ♗e1 ♗f5 **36.** ♗d6 ♗g4+ **37.** ♖g2 ♗e3+ **38.** ♖h2 e5 **39.** ♗g1 ♗f4+ **40.** ♖h3 ♗h6+



And with mate coming up soon, White resigned.

The Tal Memorial has become a solid fixture on the calendar. Getting stronger by the year and superbly organized, it is rightly seen as one of the highlights of the year. So far that highlight tended to come in November, but fearing a clash with the Candidates' tournament, which was originally announced for the autumn of this year, the Russian Chess Federation moved their most prestigious international event to June – only to discover that perhaps they had been too cooperative when the Candidates' tournament was postponed till March 2013. For the players the change was attractive, as Moscow is a much more agreeable place when the sun is shining and the temperatures are summery. On the other hand, for the officials of the RCF, who had barely recovered from their long work days during the world championship match, the prospect of staging another top event so soon after was less appealing. Media interest was significantly lower and the superb live transmissions by Digi-cast were watched by only a fraction of the numbers that followed Anand and Gelfand. In our previous issue I wrote that on average the English live broadcasts were watched by 225,000 viewers. That estimate was too optimistic. When I returned to Moscow a Digi-cast representative corrected

that number to between 60,000 at the beginning to 100,000 viewers at the end of the match. Considerably fewer than the first figures, but still impressive numbers that dwarfed the online audience of around 15,000 that followed the Tal Memorial.

Another complicating factor was the clash with Euro 2012, which must have lured away many spectators, as even in the press room in Pashkov House the football matches were followed on several laptops. Luckily for the players interested in football, the time difference in Moscow allowed them to watch the matches that were played in the evening. Evgeny Tomashevsky, one of the biggest football experts amongst the top players, confessed that he had seen practically all the matches, with the exception of the one that was shown when he was battling Kramnik till late in the evening before he succumbed after 83 moves.

For Tomashevsky the tournament might have come at a better moment.

In our world championship report we hinted at the secret seconds of Anand and Gelfand, whose names might be revealed in the years ahead (or never). The 24-year-old Russian was one of them. At the start of the tournament he was still tired from the hard work he had done for Gelfand. Tomashevsky remains convinced that this work will pay off in the near future, but here it mainly prevented him from 'rehearsing' his opening repertoire in the short break between the two events. In the first half of the Tal Memorial Tomashevsky showed what he called 'poor chess', but he gradually warmed up and played some good games, including a win over Morozovich. An essential part in his recovery

Instead of drawing numbers from a top hat the participants determined their starting numbers in a blitz tournament.

ery was played by the man he'd helped in the match of his life. They talked almost every day. 'Boris is a great player and a great human being and his help and advice were important. He supported me in a very bad situation and he helped me psychologically.' As Tomashevsky concluded with a telling smile: 'An interesting situation, I finished in clear last place, but I am in quite a good mood. I am satisfied with the quality of my play in the second half and demonstrated that I can fight back after a setback. For me it was a very interesting experience. The main difference from the tournaments I usually play is that the top class players continue to pose problems. Even under the pressure of time-trouble, they keep the tension and keep creating problems for you.'

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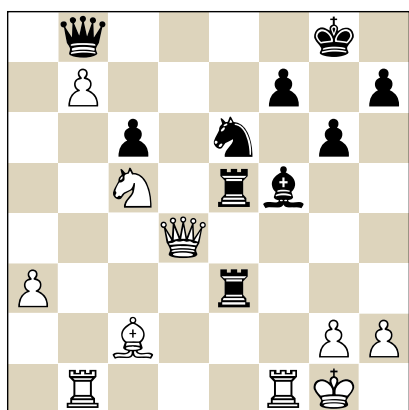
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The modest interest in the seventh Tal Memorial was regrettable, as it was probably the greatest edition so far. It started with a bang with four decisive games and a spectacular draw in the first round and continued to offer marvellous entertainment till the very last move. Alexander Grischuk certainly wasn't the only player who concluded at the end that 'almost all my games were interesting'.

In fact, the excitement started at the drawing of lots, which saw another innovation that deserves to be copied. Instead of drawing numbers from a top hat or engaging in some other non-chess related exercise, the participants determined their starting numbers in a blitz tournament. This was won by Morozevich on tiebreak (both scored 6½/9) ahead of Carlsen, with the Russian earning 5,000 euro and the Norwegian 3,000 euro. Numbers 3 to 5, Radjabov, Grischuk and Aronian, also gained an extra game as White in the main event, where the total prize fund was 100,000 euro, with 30,000 euro for the winner. The players were generally positive about this unorthodox drawing of lots, although the system may still require some fine-tuning. As blitz expert Grischuk opined: 'It's great, I think, and it's very fair. You earn yourself this extra white, although nowadays it's maybe better to have an extra black. But that's another story.'

Carlsen produced one of the flashiest blitz moves in his game against that same Grischuk:



Carlsen-Grischuk
position after 30...♖e6



VLADIMIR BARSKY

The drawing of lots was a full-fledged blitz tournament won by Morozevich on tiebreak ahead of Carlsen, with the Russian earning 5,000 and the Norwegian 3,000 euro.

Where does the queen go? **31. ♖xe5!** ♖xe5 31... ♖xe5 costs a rook after 32. b8 ♖+ ♖xb8 33. ♖xb8+ ♖g7 34. ♖xf5. **32. ♖d7!** The point. Black will be a rook down anyway. **32... ♖a7+ 33. ♖h1 ♖g7 34. b8 ♖** 'Simple chess' instead of the sadistic 34. ♖xe5. **34... ♖xb8 35. ♖xb8 ♖e3 36. ♖xf5 gxf5**, and White won.

Morozevich wasn't the only early leader to lose sight of first place in the penultimate round. Vladimir Kramnik also suffered a rare second defeat in two days. The former World Champion had been looking forward to the Tal Memorial and welcomed the switch to June. Last year he complained about the energy-sapping forces in Moscow in winter that kept him from winning a single game. What's more, he had learned a further lesson from the previous edition, when too much time had been consumed by social duties and press obligations. This time he met with friends and acquaintances when he visited Moscow at the end of the world championship match and he also used this occasion to talk to the press. In the week that separated the match from the Tal Memorial he planned to relax and prepare in a quiet training camp outside Moscow. That's when his good plans were spoiled. Instead of

getting in the right shape physically and mentally he was struck by a virus and spent most of those days in bed. Given this undesirable prelude he was actually astonished by his encouraging start. Although he wasn't feeling too well, he had the better chances in the short but tumultuous draw with Carlsen in the first round and tore down Grischuk's King's Indian in a model game in Round 2. His plan had been to survive the first half and push in the second half, but as things went it turned out to be the other way round. His last positive vibes he had in Round 6, when a long siege of Tomashevsky's defences that seemed to be heading for a draw brought him a win (for notes to this game see Jan Timman's column in this issue – ed.). Looking back Kramnik felt that this game 'took all my emotions, it completely drained me. I started to blunder, make terrible mistakes.' The next game, against McShane, was torture. 'I was just slightly better. At some point I could force a draw 10 times. But because of my shape I felt that this was the day I should finish the tournament. With a win I would more or less force first place, especially because I had better tiebreaks. And there was absolutely no risk in the position. To lose it was absolutely the worst nightmare I could imagine. That was really

a big blow for me. That was just stupid. No other word to describe it. It was comparable to that famous game in London against Magnus when I managed not to win with a piece up. He was defending well. I never had a big winning chance, but it's impossible to lose this position. The way I lost that completely drove me mad.'

Kramnik's assessment is understandable, but we shouldn't forget the achievement of McShane, who put up a great fight. From his perspective the second part of the game looked slightly different: 'In the middlegame I thought that my chances should not be worse. With the queens on the board Black always has to be careful and I knew my position was somewhat easier to play. I had two ideas, I push my h-pawn and I try to give check, and I knew that sooner or later I would get a chance to do one of them. And after the time-control I realized that probably I had an advantage. But I never thought I was necessarily going to win the game, I just wanted to cause him as many problems as I possibly could. Of course, later on, it was rather sharp and I made some mistakes.'

In any case the loss after 94 moves had a devastating effect on Kramnik: '(The next day) against Caruana I just was not there. I couldn't sleep the

whole night and combined with my overall lack of sleep already, I was a complete zombie during this game, where I ended up blundering a piece. Then, in the last round, I didn't play that badly and was winning, and I also spoiled it. The last three rounds were like a nightmare. I still cannot understand why all this is happening, why I am so up and down. It seems to be a very delicate moment when it turns from good to bad or bad to good. I have to analyse it and understand myself, why it is happening.'

While Kramnik's loss to Caruana ruined his own chances, it propelled the young Italian into sole first place! Caruana's ride to the top of the table hadn't exactly been without bumps and glitches either. The most active player in the world Top-10, who doesn't shy away from appearing in Opens as long as he keeps learning, had been eagerly looking forward to the elite gathering in Moscow, but the first days could not have turned out worse. The misery started

Interestingly, Caruana's dismal result in the blitz tournament gave him a serious advantage in the final round.

in his home-town Lugano, where his flight to Zurich was delayed. As a result he missed his flight to Moscow as well and had to travel via Frankfurt, which caused a further considerable delay. In the process he lost his luggage and had to fill out paperwork for two hours. In the end he arrived in Moscow, without luggage, at three in the morning, knowing he had to play a blitz tournament against no mean competition early in the afternoon. To himself

it didn't come as a total surprise that he finished in last place with 2 points from 9 games.

In his first two classical games Caruana felt totally exhausted. The first one he lost to Morozevich. The second one, a draw against Nakamura, lasted seven hours and 107 moves. His recovery started with a draw against Carlsen, followed by wins against Tomashevsky and McShane. His only lucky break was an escape from a totally lost position against Radjabov in Round 7.

Interestingly, Caruana's dismal result in the blitz tournament gave him a serious advantage in the final round. Theoretically, seven(!) players



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were still in contention for first place, but half a point ahead of Carlsen and Radjabov, the sole leader only needed a draw to claim the Tal Memorial, as the first tiebreaker was the number of black games! Caruana's only discomfort was that one of these black games was his last game against Levon Aronian.

Aronian, one of the clear pre-tournament favourites, started well with a win over Nakamura, but dropped to minus-1 after losing to McShane and Morozevich. The number two in the world rankings was very upset about the first half of his tournament. To his mind he was trying to play too well, was too motivated, and forgot that this is usually not what makes him flourish. He has to be excited at the board and play easily, a mood he only got back into when he told himself to let go of the pressure he had been putting on himself and to enjoy every single game. Forget about preparing and just play. He was happy about the way he played his last four games.

Yet his performance resulted in a loss of 6.8 rating points, losing some ground in the fight for first place with Carlsen – a fight that Aronian himself says he is not obsessed about. 'I am not really in some kind of a chase or whatever. I am thinking about other things. Apparently, I am not playing too badly but I have a lot of work in front of me, which I have to do in order to be one of the best. It's a much bigger thing. I know that many people love having some charts and everything, but I am not part of that. I'm trying to look at the bigger picture.'

Aronian's last-round game against Caruana became an unnerving experience for the Italian after a memory lapse in the opening.

GI 1.1 – D70

Levon Aronian

Fabiano Caruana

Moscow 2012 (9)

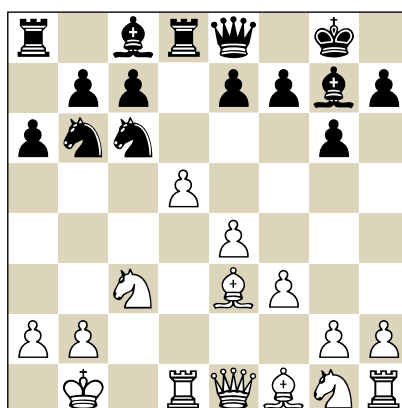
1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.f3 d5 4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.e4 ♘b6 6.♘c3 ♘g7 7.♙e3 0-0 8.♙d2 ♘c6 9.0-0-0 ♙d6

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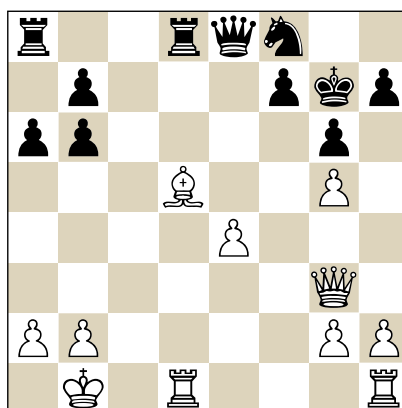


A draw away from victory, Fabiano Caruana 'forgot his preparation' and lost to Levon Aronian.

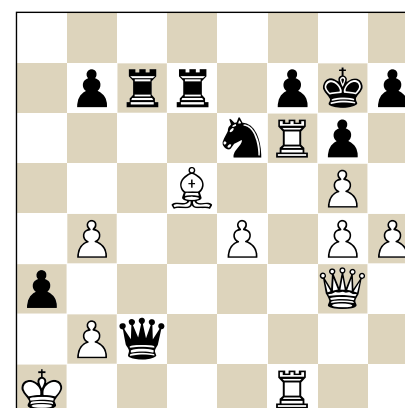
10.♙b1 ♙d8 11.♘b5 ♙d7 12.d5 a6 13.♘c3 ♙e8 14.♙e1



A rare move that Caruana had looked at earlier in the tournament, but hadn't rechecked before the final game. The knight can go to a7 or a5. It can also go to e5, but that gives White very easy play. **14...♘e5 15.♙e2 e6 16.♙xb6 cxb6 17.f4 ♘d7 18.dxe6 ♙xe6 19.♘f3 ♙e8 20.♙h4 ♙f6 21.♘g5 ♘f8 22.♙c4 ♙g7 23.♙g3 ♙xg5 24.fxg5 ♙e6 25.♘d5 ♙xd5 26.♙xd5**



Black has a highly unpleasant position and on top of that Caruana had little time left. Aronian won without too many problems. **26...♙d7 27.h4 ♙c8 28.a3 ♙d8 29.♙f2 ♘e6 30.♙a2 ♙e7 31.♙hf1 b5 32.♙d3 ♙cc7 33.♙b1 a5 34.g4 a4 35.♙f3 ♙d6 36.♙f6 ♙c5 37.♙g3 b4 38.axb4 ♙c2+ 39.♙a1 a3**



The beginning of some last-ditch attempts that won't change the outcome. **40.bxa3 ♙xd5 41.exd5 ♘d4 42.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 43.♙e5+ ♙f8 44.♙b8+ ♙g7 45.♙xf7+ ♙xf7 46.♙xb7+ ♙e8 47.♙b8+ ♙d7 48.♙a7+ ♙d6 49.♙xd4 ♙c1+ 50.♙a2 ♙c2+ 51.♙b2 ♙c4+ 52.♙a1 ♙xg4 53.♙f2 ♙xd5 54.♙c5+ Black resigned.**

As Caruana allowed Aronian to destroy his dreams, Teimour Radjabov must have thought back to his own game against the Italian. The Azeri

grandmaster could still have won the tournament if he had defeated Nakamura with black in his last game. Still, he knew that his draw against the out-of-form American was not the game that had cost him first prize. Against Caruana the computer had shown a plus-2 advantage, and that is normally not the kind of advantage you need a computer for. Another game that Radjabov was critical about was that against Carlsen, where instead of making a draw he moved his king to a square that he had already rejected in his calculations ('A mouse slip, as they would call it at the ICC'). He was less critical of his game against Kramnik, where he repeated moves although he was an exchange up. 'That was unclear. He had 45 minutes against my 16, and I was unsure about my plan. If he stays put and doesn't do anything I don't see where to break.'

All in all, Radjabov was 'relatively satisfied' about a result that took him to fourth place in the world rankings. 'I could have done much better, but I tried. I was trying in each game and did my very best, didn't go to the beach. Maybe at some point I was unlucky, but then what can you do?' Going by his recent results there can be no doubt that Radjabov will be a force to be reckoned with in next year's Candidates' tournament, a feel-

ing that doesn't diminish when he expresses his current state of mind: 'I get much more pleasure now than some time ago. I was always trying to produce some fantastic result and that somehow overshadowed my play. Somehow I feel calmer. Maybe it's a matter of age; I have turned 25. They say that after that you get older every year. Maybe I feel more mature, maybe something changed in my philosophy. I feel that I am happy to play chess and I am very happy to play in the tournaments, whatever happens. Even after losing some strange games. Before I would be stressing myself and saying how could I do that? Especially after missing a draw as I did against Carlsen. Now I am much more philosophical.'

The key game of the last round proved to be the encounter between the revelation of the event and the top-seed. McShane had just beaten Kramnik and Morozevich and had the white pieces. Carlsen was the only player who had not lost a game,

'I played as well as I could have hoped to, at the level I wanted to be on. It wasn't brilliant or anything, but it was good.'

and his only win so far had been with black. No one expected the Londoner to play for a draw, as this is alien to his style, and after all he still had a theoretical chance to win the tournament. He started cautiously, but in the end it was his ambition for more that did him in.

Obviously, McShane was disappointed that the tournament ended on a sad note for him, but quite soon happiness about his performance prevailed.

'Yeah, it's great. Although I can sort of play chess with the best players in the world and occasionally have scored the odd victory here and there, I never managed to beat three such players in the same tournament. It is of course a bit of a disappointment to lose today. I feel I did this to myself. But of course overall I must be happy.'

Even more delighted was Magnus Carlsen. Once again he rounded off a Tal Memorial with a win with the black pieces. In 2009 it was only good enough for shared second place, in 2010 he didn't play, in 2011 it yielded him first place on tiebreak and this time he finished on top alone.



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Carlsen also divided his tournament into two distinct halves: 'I might have gotten a better score if I had started a little bit better. Generally speaking, I didn't get going at all at the start. In the first round against Kramnik I made a simple tactical blunder, and I tried to correct it by playing riskily, with ♖f4, which could have turned out very badly. In the game against Morozevich I was taken by surprise by ♜c1, and I reacted very badly. ♜d7 is just a blunder and then this was pure suffering... As a professional you should not of course make such mistakes. But I pulled myself together and played that game. And against Caruana I overestimated my position from the opening. I thought with the two bishops White should be better, but it was nothing. The first three rounds were really a struggle, but then in the fourth round against Grischuk I found an interesting idea after the opening. When I found it at the board, I thought, OK, I just have to go for this, because it's so unusual. I felt that even with this locked-in bishop I should be doing very well. I think I was doing well up to a certain point, then it got out of hand with time-trouble and everything. But it was a really exciting game and it was good after these first three games to finally play some chess.

'In the next game against Radjabov the position from the opening was more or less equal and it was never on my mind to steer for a draw. You have to take your chances and I felt

that the position held more dangers for him than for me. Fortunately I put pressure on him, I played quickly, and he could not make the right decisions at the critical moments.

'In general, I felt that from Game 4 onwards it could have even gone better. I played as well as I could have hoped to, at the level I wanted to be on. It wasn't brilliant or anything, but it was good. I was pressing against Aronian the day afterwards. Against Nakamura I had no special problems with black. And with Tomashevsky I got a great position, but it was just a pity that I spoiled it with a couple of hasty moves.

'Today I didn't rate my chances very highly. You can never count on

winning with black. McShane played solidly in the opening; I didn't think there would be many chances for me. Then he could have simplified, but he deserves some credit also for wanting to play something more interesting. In a way that also played into my hands, because I had a position that wasn't too difficult to play and I had a massive time advantage. (With a grin) I think I also had some advantage in playing strength, which may be important. And then, in time-trouble, he collapsed. As so often happens.'

The next day most of the players leave the opulent Ritz Carlton to go home. At regular intervals they appear in the lobby with their suitcases to check out. Teimour Radjabov and his family will stay in Moscow for some more days. Magnus Carlsen, allergic to morning flights and mornings in general, has a flight in the afternoon. By that time Luke McShane has long left the Russian capital. At 2.30 in the night a taxi has picked him and his second Peter Wells up and taken them to the airport. Thanks to the time difference they arrive in London early in the morning, allowing McShane to go straight to work.



Once the trophy is yours it's easy to look back. Relaxed and relieved, Magnus Carlsen answers the questions of Eteri Kublashvili for the Russian Chess Federation website.

Moscow 2012																cat. XXII
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		TPR	
1	Magnus Carlsen	IGM	NOR	2835	*	½	1	½	½	½	½	1	½	½	5½	2849
2	Fabiano Caruana	IGM	ITA	2770	½	*	½	1	0	0	½	1	½	1	5	2820
3	Teimour Radjabov	IGM	AZE	2784	0	½	*	½	½	½	½	1	½	1	5	2818
4	Vladimir Kramnik	IGM	RUS	2801	½	0	½	*	½	½	1	0	½	1	4½	2773
5	Alexander Morozevich	IGM	RUS	2769	½	1	½	½	*	1	1	0	0	0	4½	2777
6	Levon Aronian	IGM	ARM	2825	½	1	½	½	0	*	½	0	1	½	4½	2771
7	Alexander Grischuk	IGM	RUS	2761	½	½	½	0	0	½	*	1	1	½	4½	2778
8	Luke McShane	IGM	ENG	2706	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	*	½	½	4	2741
9	Hikaru Nakamura	IGM	USA	2775	½	½	½	½	1	0	0	½	*	½	4	2733
10	Evgeny Tomashevsky	IGM	RUS	2738	½	0	0	0	1	½	½	½	½	*	3½	2700



NOTES BY

Magnus Carlsen

RL 14.12 – C85

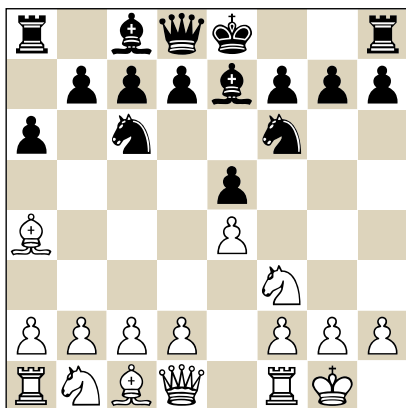
Luke McShane

Magnus Carlsen

Moscow 2012 (9)

After a disappointing draw in a long game against Tomashevsky in the penultimate round it was clear that my only (slight) chance of winning the tournament lay in winning this game. In theory, Luke could actually also win the tournament (if he won), in addition to pulling off an unlikely hat trick against the 2800+ players, so I was hoping that he would be in a fighting mood.

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♙e7

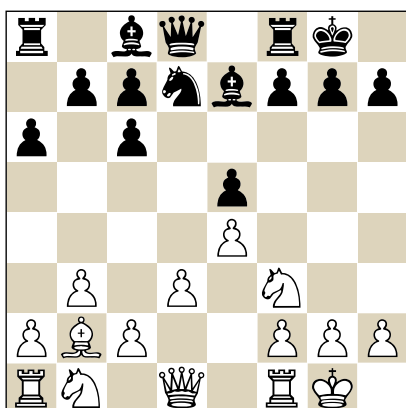


6.♙xc6 The Delayed Exchange Variation was definitely a surprise, and a slightly unpleasant one, as in the resulting structures it's not all that easy to create winning chances with black.

6...dxc6 7.d3 ♘d7 8.b3

I was already out of book here, but it's not a big deal, as such positions can more or less be played by hand.

8...0-0 9.♙b2



9...f6 I also considered ...♙d6/...f6, but eventually decided to go for the most natural option.

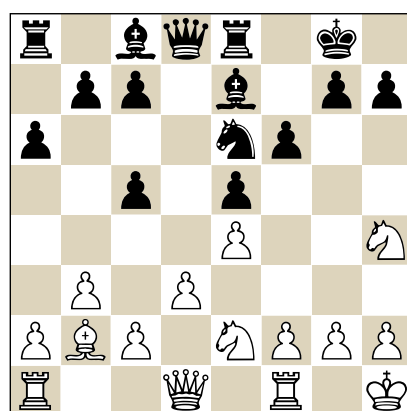
10.♘c3 I sort of expected this knight to go to d2, but c3-e2 is a sensible route as well, especially since it supports f2-f4 from there.

10...♙e8

10...♘c5 might look more natural, but I was slightly concerned about 11.d4 exd4 12.♘xd4, as the knight might look a bit funny on c5.

11.♙h1 Frankly, I did not quite understand the point behind this move, but it obviously doesn't spoil the position.

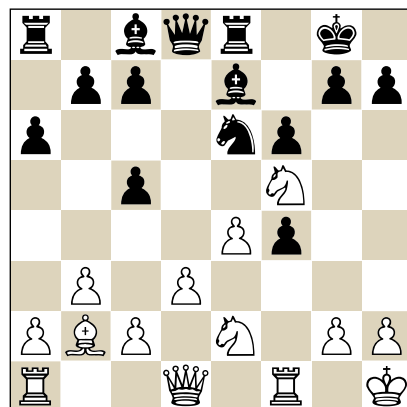
11...♘f8 12.♘e2 c5 13.♘h4 ♘e6



14.♘f5

Very natural, but now Black gets the chance to keep some of the tension, which improved my mood a lot.

The alternative was 14.f4 ♘xf4 (14...exf4 15.♘f5 – 15.♘xf4 ♘d4 is the point of this move order –



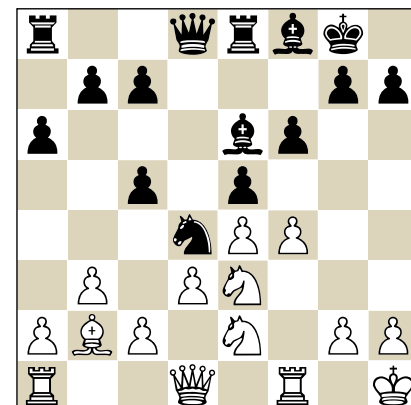
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

15...♙d6 16.♘xd6 ♙xd6 17.♙d2, followed by 18.♘xf4, is very comfortable for White) 15.♘xf4 exf4 16.♙xf4 ♙d6 17.♙f2 ♙e5 18.♙xe5 ♙xe5, with very dry equality.

14...♙f8 15.♘e3

Here, too, 15.f4 ♘xf4 16.♘xf4 ♙xf5 17.exf5 exf4 18.♙xf4 ♙d6 presents Black with no problems whatsoever.

15...♘d4 16.f4 ♙e6



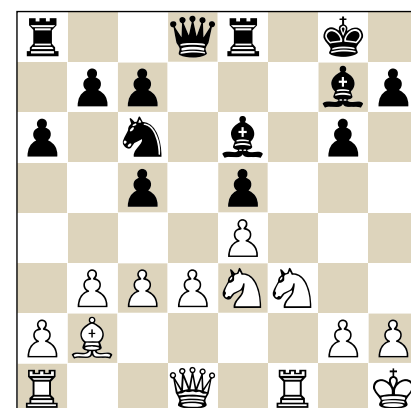
Now there is no need to take on f4.

17.fxe5

Instead, 17.f5 ♙f7 18.g4 was possible, but Black should be doing well then, as playing g5 is still many moves away for White, and counterplay with ...b5-c4 will always be in the air.

17...fxe5 18.♘g1 g6 19.c3 ♘c6 20.♘f3 ♙g7

It's too early for Black to claim an advantage here, but I was feeling good about the situation, especially as my opponent was burning a lot of time.



21.♙e1?!

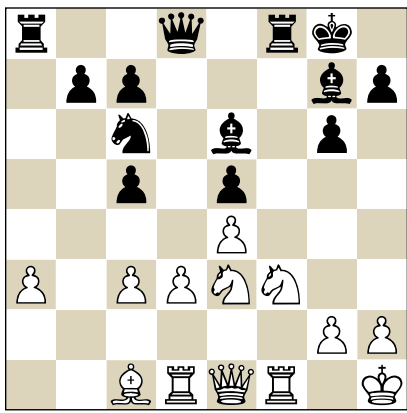
In view of my next move, this is a clear inaccuracy.

21...a5

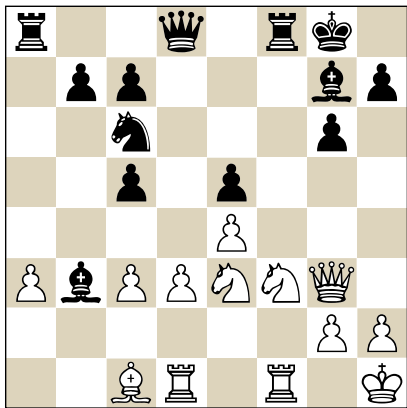
Taking advantage of the fact that b3 is no longer protected by the queen, and forcing a weakening on the queenside.

22.♙d1 a4 23.bxa4 ♙xa4 24.a3 ♙f8 25.♙c1 ♙a8

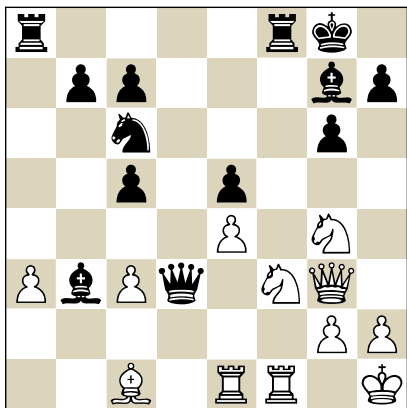
Nevertheless, White is still fine here, as it's hard to get to the white weaknesses, and my pieces don't have very many squares.



26. ♖g3 Another inaccuracy, which is based on an overestimation of his attacking chances after the subsequent pawn sac.
26... ♗b3



27. ♖de1
 Objectively this is just a blunder, but I can understand why Luke was not too keen on 27. ♖d2 ♗h6 28. ♖e1 ♗e6 29. ♖d1 ♗f4, when Black is slowly but surely improving his position.
27... ♖xd3 28. ♗g4



28... ♗e6
 I could also have taken on c3, but this one felt very sensible.
29. ♗h6+ ♖h8 30. ♖h4 ♗f6

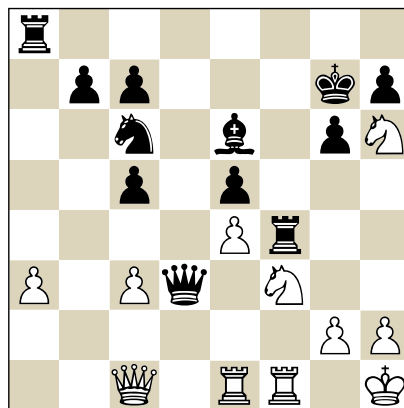


The start of the game that decided the 2012 Tal Memorial. Magnus Carlsen has scored a first small psychological victory by surprising Luke McShane with his opening choice.

I just did not want to let White get his knight to g5 (which is impossible now since the rook will be hanging on f1). Without the knight on g5 White really doesn't have any dangerous ideas.

31. ♗g5 ♗xg5 32. ♖xg5 ♖g7 33. ♖c1 ♖f4?

A really careless mistake.
 33... ♖d7 was easily winning, as White is a pawn down with a bad position.

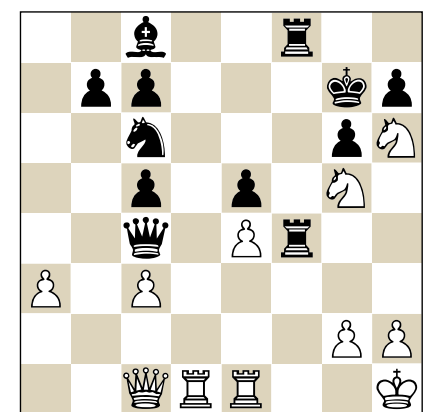


34. ♖d1?
 34. ♗g5 was White's last chance. For some reason I only considered this after 34. ♖d1 ♖c4, when it can be easily met by ... ♖af8, as the queen protects the bishop on e6. But after the immediate 34. ♗g5 Black could

go 34... ♖d6 (34... ♗c4 35. ♖xf4 exf4 36. ♗g4 also keeps the fight going) 35. ♖xf4 exf4 36. ♖d1 ♖e5 37. ♗xe6+ ♖xe6 38. ♖xf4, and White has his best position in a long time.

34... ♖c4 35. ♖fe1
 35. ♗g5 ♖af8 is plain sailing, as mentioned earlier.

35... ♖af8 36. ♗g5 ♗c8



Now the knight on h6 is doomed. Luke was also running out of time, which didn't make it any easier.

37. g3 ♖f2
 Now ... ♖a2 is a lethal threat.
38. ♗f5+ gxf5 39. ♗h3 ♖e2 40. ♖g5+ ♖h8
 White resigned.



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NOTES BY

Fabiano Caruana

SO 4.4 – C45

Fabiano Caruana**Vladimir Kramnik**

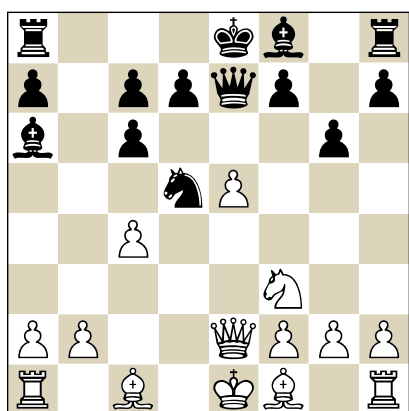
Moscow 2012 (8)

This game was played in the penultimate round. In the previous game, I had miraculously survived a dead lost position against Radjabov, and as a result I was tying for first place with +1.

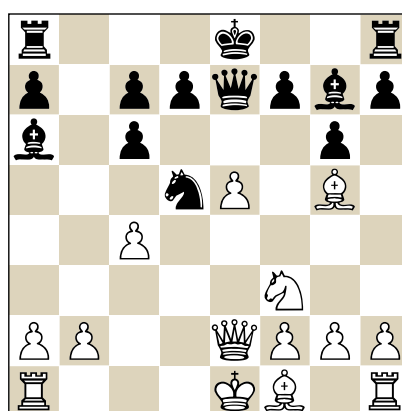
1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

The decision to play the Scotch for the first time in my life, in such an important game, and especially against a player like Kramnik, wasn't an easy one. However, I felt like getting a new and interesting position from the opening, rather than bash my head against the Berlin Wall yet again. In hindsight, this decision was a perfect one.

3...exd4 4.♗xd4 ♗f6 5.♗xc6 bxc6 6.e5 ♖e7 7.♖e2 ♘d5 8.c4 ♙a6 9.♗d2 g6 10.♗f3



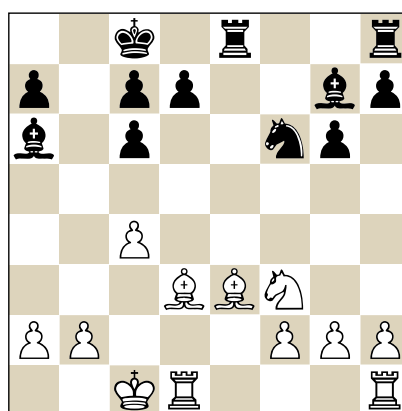
10...♙g7 Before the game I had also checked 10...♖b4+ 11.♙d1 ♖b8 12.♖c2 ♗e7, with complex play, which perfectly suited my mood. **11.♙g5**



11...f6 This move took me by surprise, although I must admit it's a very logical one.

I had looked at the following forced variation: 11...♖b4+ 12.♙d2 ♖xd2+ 13.♗xd2 ♗b6 14.b3 d6 15.0-0-0 dxe5 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 17.♖e1 ♗d7 18.f4 f6 19.fxe5 ♗xe5 20.♗c3 0-0 21.♗e2 ♖fe8 22.♗xe5 fxe5 23.♗f3, with a pleasant advantage, despite the pawn deficit.

12.exf6 ♖xe2+ 13.♗xe2 ♗xf6 14.0-0-0 0-0-0 15.♗e3 ♖de8 16.♗d3



16...d6

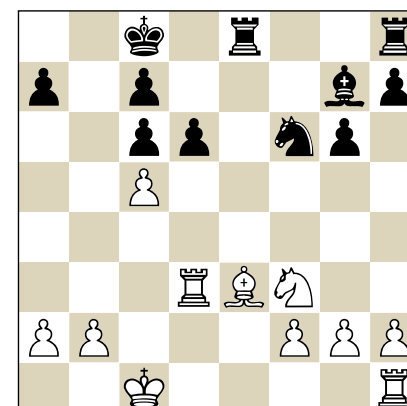
After 16...♗g4? White can safely grab the pawn: 17.♗xa7 ♗b7 18.h3, with a clear advantage.

17.c5

The only logical way to proceed, as

otherwise Black would play ...c5 himself, with a comfortable position.

17...♗xd3 18.♖xd3



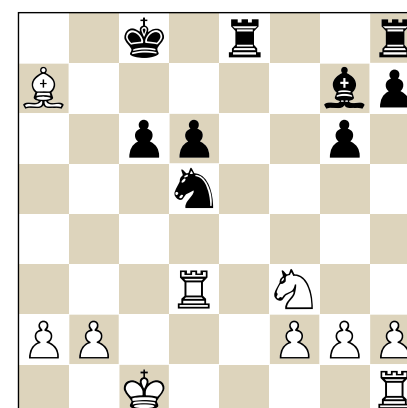
18...♗d5 The most natural move, but perhaps not the best one.

18...d5 19.♗d4 leaves Black's position a bit awkward.

However, the accurate 18...♗e4! 19.cxd6 cxd6 would have resulted in dead equality, since White can no longer capture on a7 due to ...c5.

19.cxd6 cxd6 20.♗xa7

Black should have enough compensation here, but over the board it isn't so simple to prove it. Every one of Kramnik's next moves is quite natural and hard to criticize, but each move slightly weakens Black's position until he no longer has any compensation for the pawn.



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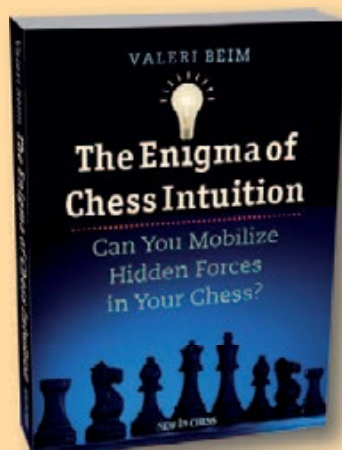
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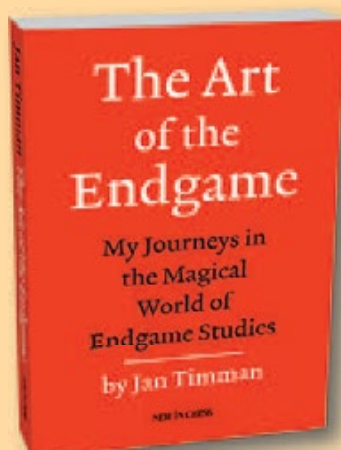


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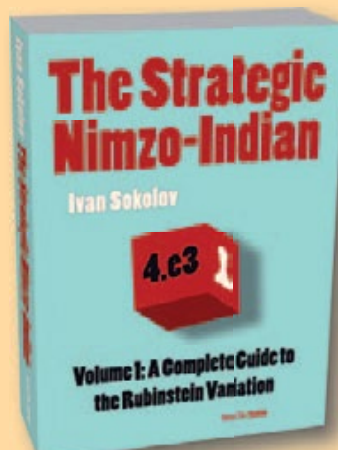
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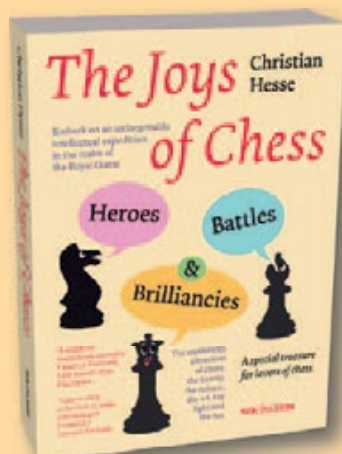
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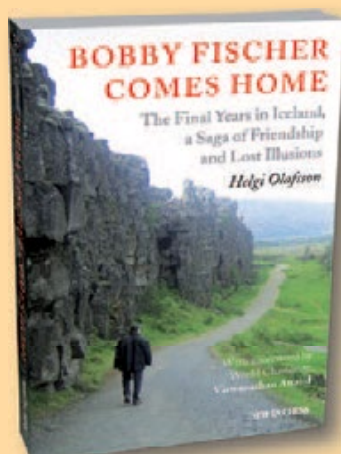
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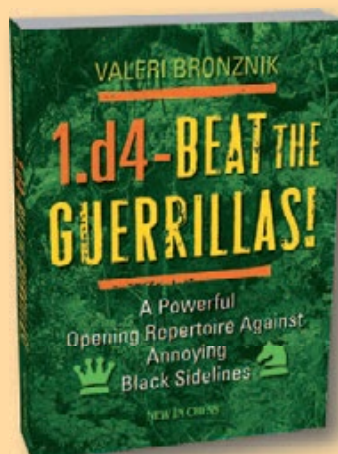
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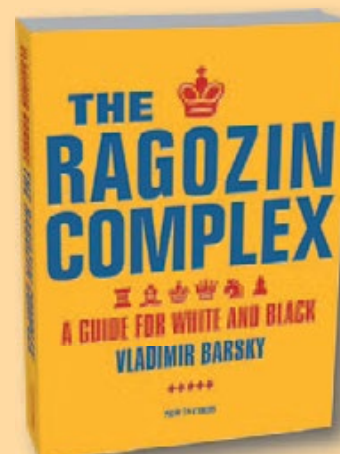
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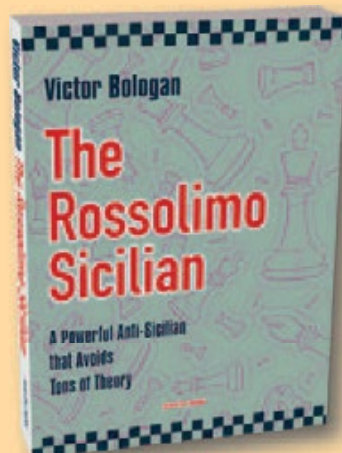
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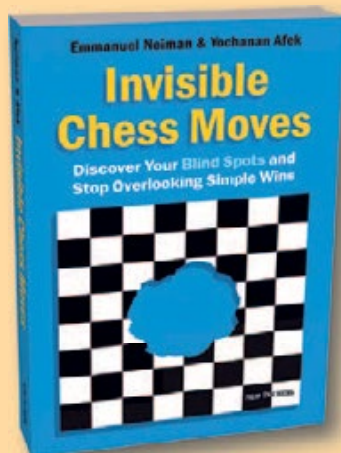
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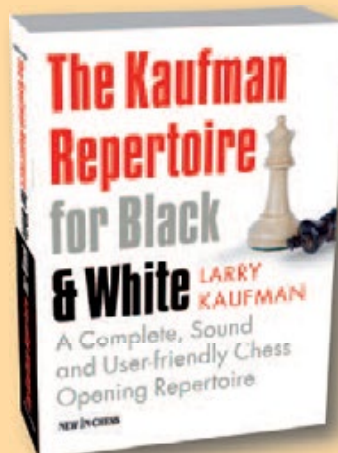
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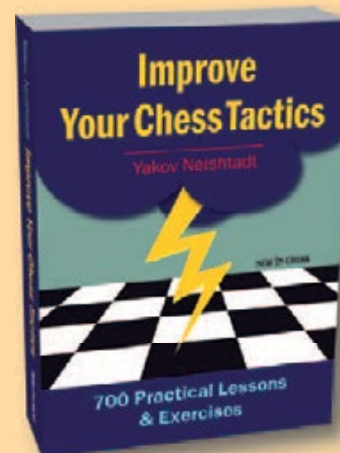
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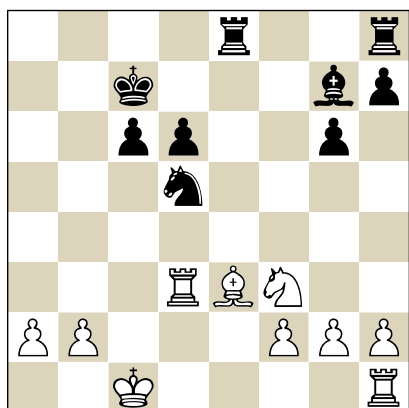
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20...♔c7 Perhaps stronger was 20...♔d7!?, which has the advantage of avoiding ♖e6 check in some variations. This seems sufficient for rough equality: 21.♖b3 ♔c7 22.♙e3 ♖b8 23.♖xb8 ♖xb8 24.♙d4 ♙xd4 25.♗xd4 ♗f4, and Black regains the pawn with a fine position.

21.♙e3



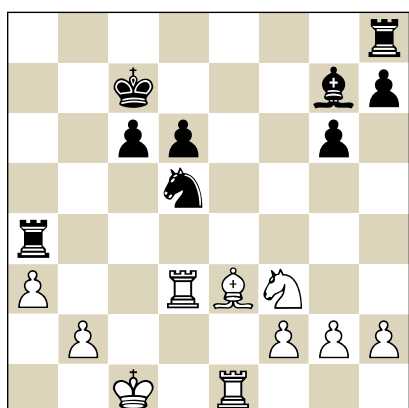
21...♖a8 Another small step in the wrong direction.

Better was 21...♖b8 22.♗d2 ♖he8 23.♖e1 ♗xe3!. It seems difficult to part with such a beautiful knight, but as is well known, the pieces that remain on the board are more important than the pieces that are traded off. This exchange ensures a bright future for Black's bishop, which is much more versatile than White's knight. After 24.fxe3 ♖b4, Black has adequate compensation for the pawn.

22.a3 ♖a4

Another possible continuation was 22...♖hb8 23.♙d4 ♗f4 24.♖e3 ♙xd4 25.♗xd4 ♗xg2 26.♖e7+ ♔b6 27.♖xh7 ♗f4, and Black should be able to make a draw due to White's broken pawn structure.

23.♖e1



23...♖f8?

After this strategic mistake Black will be struggling for the rest of the game. It was his last chance to trade off White's bishop.

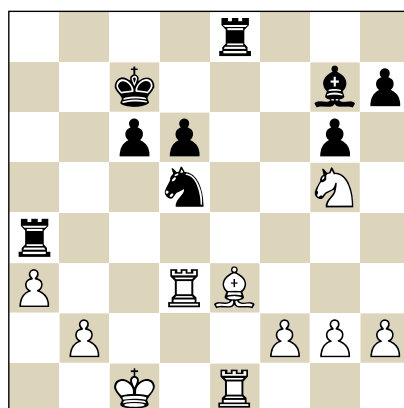
23...♗xe3 is simply mandatory now: 24.fxe3 ♖e8, and Black will have to suffer a bit, but he should be able to hold the position.

24.♗g5

Now Black is even facing tactical problems.

24...♖e8

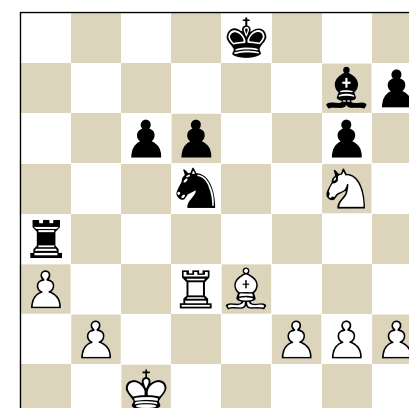
24...♔d7 25.♖b3 threatens 26.♖b7, which is surprisingly difficult to counter.



25.♙b6+

I was happy to trade off some material, since it became clear that my king would never be in any danger.

25...♔d7 26.♖xe8 ♔xe8 27.♙e3



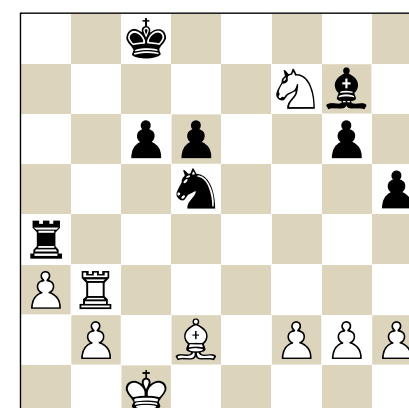
27...♔d7

Maybe Black should still try 27...♗xe3 28.♖xe3+ ♔d7, although this version of the exchange is clearly unfavourable for him.

28.♖b3 ♔c8 29.♙d2 h5

29...h6 30.♗f7 wins another pawn.

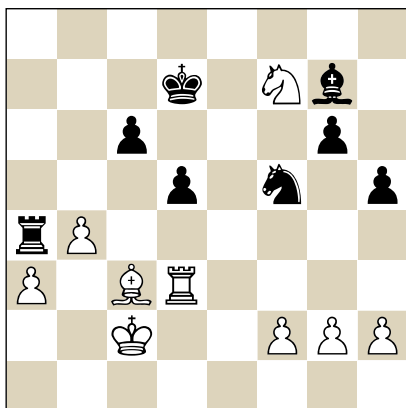
30.♗f7



I continue to pursue my advantage in the most concrete way, but perhaps it

was more practical (especially due to my time shortage at this stage) to simply consolidate my position and begin advancing on the queenside.

30...♔c7 31.♖g3 ♘e7 32.b4 ♔d7 33.♞d3 d5 34.♔c2 ♘f5 35.♙c3



A very important move, as otherwise Black gets sufficient counterplay with ...♘d4.

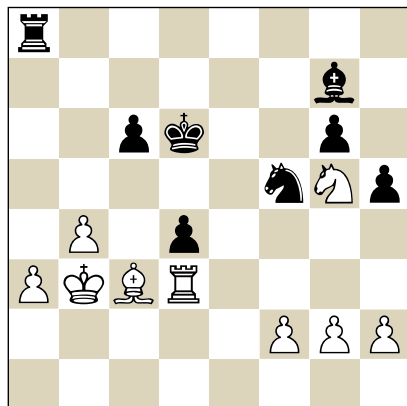
35...d4

35...♞xa3 36.♙xg7 ♞xd3 37.♔xd3 ♘xg7 38.♘e5+ ♔d6 39.♘xg6 is most likely winning for White.

36.♔b3 ♞a8 37.♘g5 ♔d6

The last couple of moves Kramnik

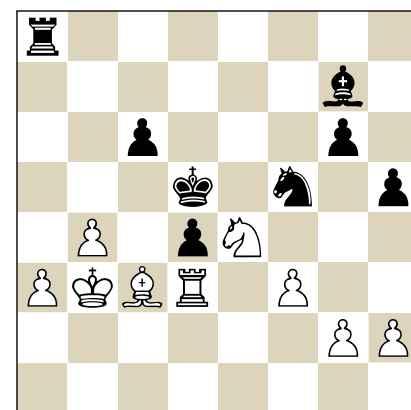
has defended accurately, and it seems like he is beginning to get counterplay with ...♔d5, supporting his advanced d-pawn.



38.f3?! An inaccuracy which... wins the game immediately! Surprisingly, this move, which was made with only seconds on the clock, almost spoils all the hard work I had done.

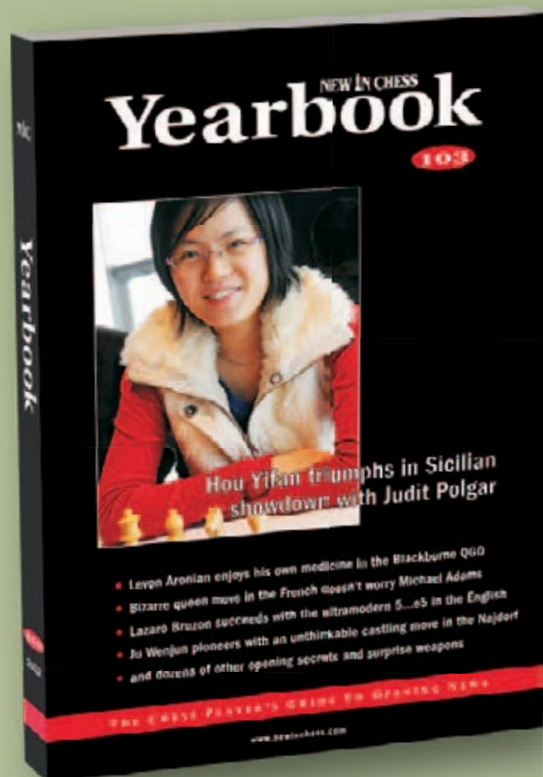
The precise 38.♔c4! ♞xa3 39.♙xd4 ♞xd3 40.♙c5+ ♔e5 41.♔xd3 gives White good chances to score the full point, although there is still plenty of work to be done.

38...♔d5 39.♘e4



39...♘e3?? A bizarre blunder, ending the game immediately. Instead, Black had a miraculous chance to turn the game around: 39...♞xa3+!! 40.♔xa3 ♔c4 41.♞d1 dxc3, and it seems like Black's advanced c-pawn will secure a draw.

40.♞xe3 Black resigned. An unfortunately abrupt finish. To my great shock (and probably to that of many others as well) I found myself in clear first place going into the final round. However, I wasn't quite up to the challenge and lost without a fight against Levon Aronian, ending up in shared second place.



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NOTES BY

Teimour Radjabov

SI 31.4 – B30

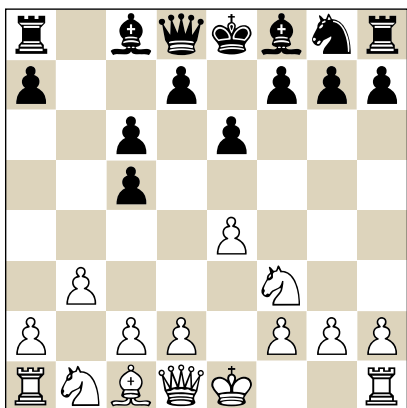
Luke McShane

Teimour Radjabov

Moscow 2012 (2)

After winning my first game against Tomashevsky I had to play McShane. Neither of us could probably even imagine that Luke would play seven decisive games in this tournament. Moreover, almost each of his games led to a new leader of the tournament! However, now we are at the start of Round 2. Let's see.

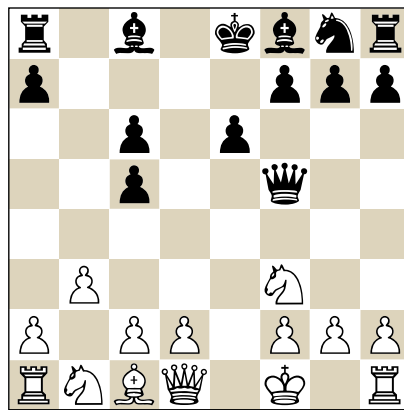
1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 e6 4.♙xc6 bxc6 5.b3



This line came into fashion especially after the match Anand-Gelfand, so it's no surprise that it was tried in the first super-tournament just one week after the match.

5...d6 Preparing ...e5. Now White reacts quickly with a pawn push to the same square to prevent Black's plan. Gelfand's team concentrated on the reply 5...e5. Anand won the decisive second game of the tiebreak after 6. ♘xe5 ♙e7 7.d4 d6 8. ♘xc6 ♙xe4+ 9. ♙e2 ♙xe2+ 10. ♙xe2 ♙b7 11. ♘a5. **6.e5 dxe5 7.♘xe5 ♙d5 8.♘f3 ♙e4+ 9.♙f1 ♙f5!?**

A strange-looking move, connected with the idea of withdrawing the queen and avoiding d3 with tempo for White. There is also the idea of meeting 10.d3 with 10...♙f6!?, depriving White of the a1-h8 diagonal, as he'd have to meet 10...♙f6 with 11.c3.



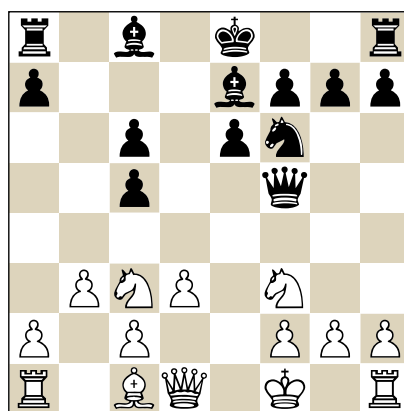
10.♘c3

The alternative 10.♘a3 was tried against me by Grischuk. White intends to play d3 and the knight is well-positioned on c4 anyway: 10...

'Almost each of Luke's games led to a new leader of the tournament!'

♘f6 11.d3 ♘d5 12.♘c4 ♙a6, and our game in Round 6 eventually ended in a draw.

10...♘f6 11.d3 ♙e7

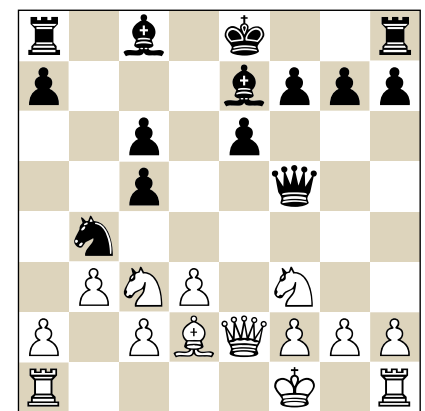


Natural development. Now White has to decide which plan to implement. Certainly, conquering the c5-pawn is not as easy as it looks and any regrouping has to be done accurately, as White's king is still in the centre!

12.♙e2 ♘d5 13.♙d2

As the bishop is now on d2, the c2-d3 chain becomes a bit vulnerable, so I decided to go for concrete measures.

13...♘b4!? There was nothing wrong with 13...0-0, but 13...♘b4 just seemed a better option.

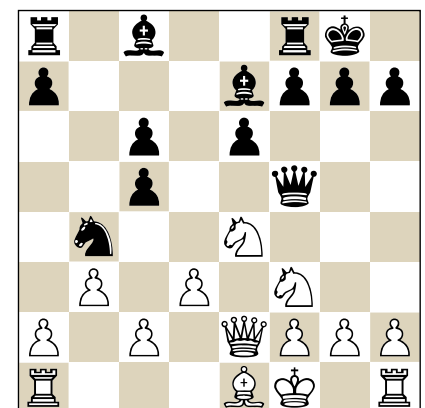


14.♙e1!?

After this move Black is at least slightly better, as his plan is clear. White on the other hand is left with passive pieces and his king in the centre.

Better than the text-move seemed 14. ♙c1!?, for instance 14...♙a6 15.♘e4 ♙d8 16.♘e1, with an unclear game.

14...0-0 15.♘e4

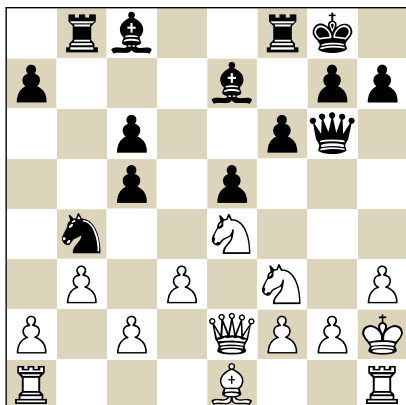


15...f6 Here 15...a5!?! deserved serious attention! It looks dubious at first sight to put the pawn on a5, where it may later become a target for White's knight, but in fact the position is very dynamic and Black will be able to counter in the centre if White decides to go for the pawn immediately.

16.h3 e5 17.♙g1

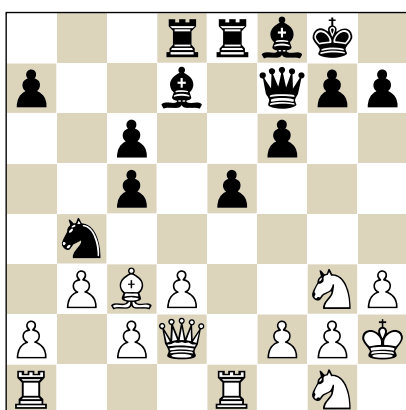
After 17.g4 ♙e6 18.♘g3 ♙f7, with ...f5 always in the air, I prefer Black's position.

17...♖b8 18.♔h2 ♕g6



It's not that easy to break open White's position here, as Black cannot make the pushes ...f5 and ...e4 work quickly, so both sides have to regroup for a while.

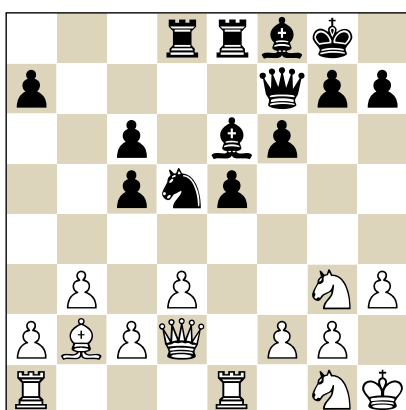
19.♘g3 ♕f7 20.♙c3 ♘d7 21.♖he1 ♗fe8 22.♕d2 ♙f8 23.♘g1 ♖bd8



Now Black's pieces are in their best positions. Everything is ready for a central break with ...f5 or ...c4.

24.♙b2 ♘d5 Bringing back the knight, as 24...c4 doesn't work yet.

25.♔h1 ♙e6 As ...c4 right away didn't work, I decided to try the ...♕c7-a5 plan.



26.a3

The computer now suggests 26...♘c7, followed by the manoeuvre ...♘b5-d4.

An interesting idea, but I followed my initial intentions.

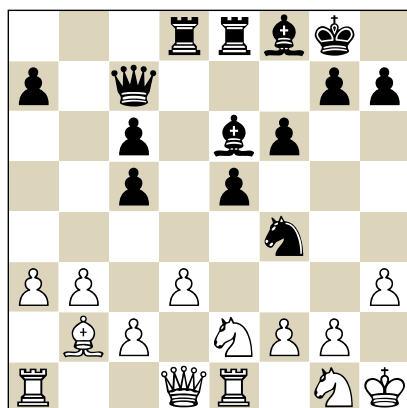
26...♕c7 27.♕d1

Too passive. Maybe White should have stayed put with 27.♘f3.

‘We had a great fighting tournament with lots of decisive games; maybe one of the most amazing tournaments in my life!’

27...♘f4 Another idea was 27...a5!?

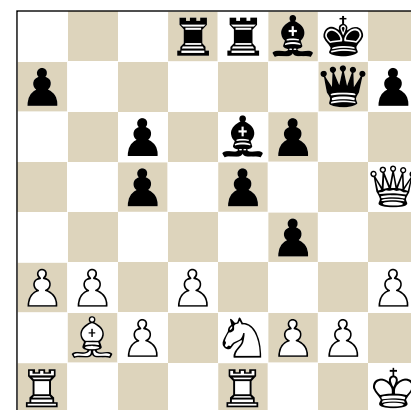
28.♘3e2 White is doomed to a passive defence here. The rook on a1 is out of play and ...c4 is always in the air. Now I made a mistake which later granted me the point...



28...g5 From an objective point of view 28...♘g6! was of course the move, when Black threatens ...f5-f4 or ...f5-e4 and White's king is beset by problems. Even ...♘h4 is a threat!

The immediate 28...e4 won't yield anything. After 29.♘xf4 ♕xf4 30.♖xe4 ♕xf2 31.♕e2 the position is equal.

29.♘xf4 gxf4 30.♕h5 ♕g7 31.♘e2



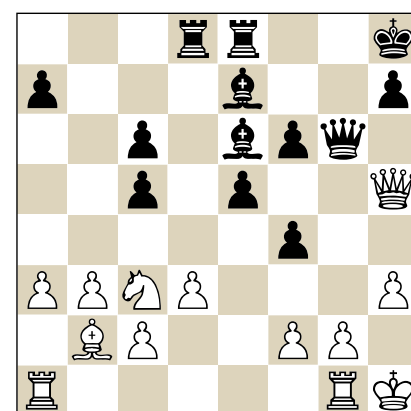
Now the jokes are over. White is threatening g3/♖g1 or ♖g1/g4 himself and also ♘xf4 is in the air. Of course, the position is still OK for Black, but accuracy is required.

31...♙e7 32.♘c3 Here 32.♘xf4 doesn't work: 32...♙f7 33.♕f5 exf4 34.♖xe7 ♖xe7 35.♙xf6 ♗d5 36.♕xf4 ♕f8, and Black is on top.

32...♔h8 33.♖g1

And here, as g3 is coming, I decided that 33...♕g6 was the best move. Black is at no risk and somehow it is only White who has to be accurate.

33...♕g6



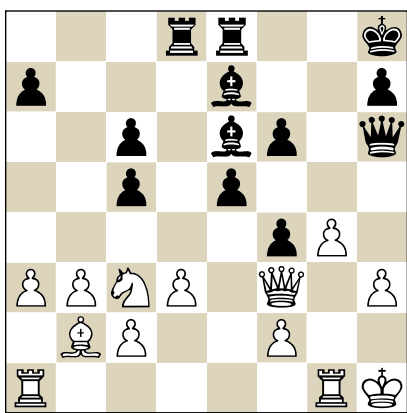
34.♕f3?!

This is not a losing plan, but it allows interesting options for Black. We had both been in time-trouble for a long time, so it was our blitzing that influenced our decisions.

Best was 34.♕xg6!, with an equal endgame: 34...hxc6 35.♘e4 ♔g7 36. f3 g5 (or 36...♙d5, with equal play) 37.♖gd1 ♔g6 38.a4 ♙f7.

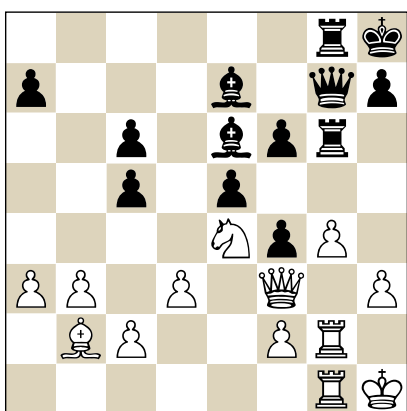
34...♕h6 35.g4

The only move, as otherwise Black goes ...♖g8 and g4 is no longer possible due to ...fxg3 and the capture on h3.



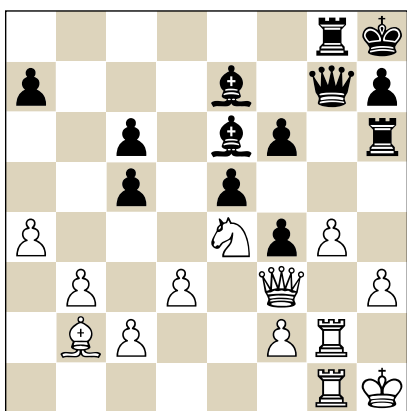
35...Tg8 An interesting alternative was 35...c4!? 36.bxc4 ♖h4!?

36.♘e4 Tg6 37.Tg2 Tdg8 38.♞ag1 ♖g7?! One more move that objectively speaking is not that good. 38...♙d5!, preventing any white play in the centre, was better, when the position is about equal.



39.a4?! After 39.♖e2! ♞h6 40.♞h2 ♞g6 41.f3 h5 the position is unclear, but both sides have their chances, as Black's bishop on e7 is certainly not the best piece imaginable.

39...♞h6



40.♙h2?? The king has nothing to do on h2. That was the square for the rook to defend the kingside. Suddenly, after my next move, White is lost.

NEW IN CHESS

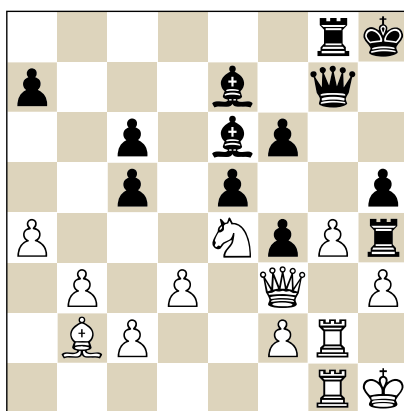


Teimour Radjabov with Ilya Levitov, chairman of the board of the RCF at the prize-giving. With the Elo points he gained, the Azeri moved into 4th place in the world rankings.

He should have played 40.♘c3, when after 40...♙d5 41.♘xd5 cxd5 Black is only marginally better.

40...♞h4! After this move Luke was, of course, very upset, as he realized that he was lost, while the position no longer looked really dangerous. All the variations are in Black's favour and everywhere he is tactically winning.

41.♙h1 h5! A mistake would have been 41...♖h6? 42.♞h2 ♙xg4 43.♞xg4 ♞xg4 44.♖xg4 ♞xg4 45.hxg4, and it's a draw. Black will not be able to break through White's castle of pawns and the bishop on e7 suffices as a good defender.



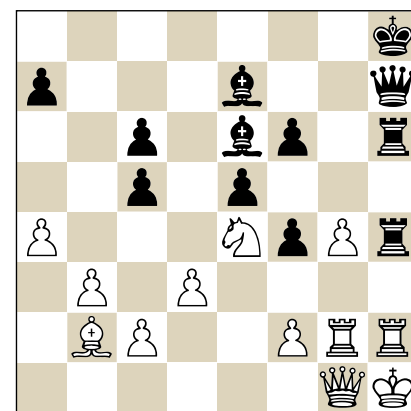
42.♞h2

I thought that 42.g5 was best, although Black should win here too after 42...♞xh3+ 43.♖xh3 ♙xh3 44.♞h2 fxg5 45.♞xh3 ♖f7 46.♙xe5+ ♙h7 47.

f3 ♖e6 48.♞xh5+ ♙g6 49.♞hxg5+ ♙xg5 50.♞xg5+ ♙f7.

In case of 42.gxh5, 42...♙xh3!! is an important finesse. It's mate in seven against the best defence ☺, or in 2 after 43.♞xg7 ♙f1+ 44.♖h3 ♞xh3 mate.

42...hxg4 43.♖d1 ♖h7 44.♞gg2 ♞g6 Now the second rook joins the battery on the h-file. White is helpless. **45.♖g1 ♞gh6 46.hxg4**



46...♙xg4! Also winning was 46...f3 47.♞xh4 fxg2+ 48.♙xg2 ♞xh4.

47.♙d2 f3 48.♞xh4 fxg2+ White resigned.

We had a great fighting tournament with lots of decisive games; maybe one of the most amazing tournaments in my life! I hope everybody enjoyed the Tal Memorial 2012 and I am once again very thankful to the organizers for the great organization.



NOTES BY

Vladimir Kramnik

KI 4.6 – E97

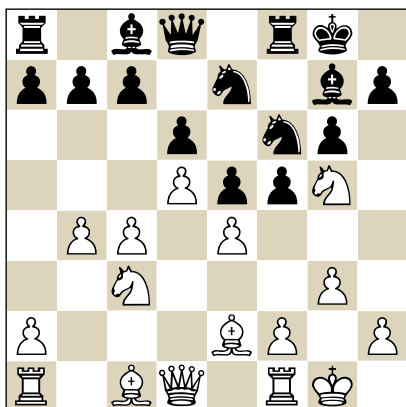
Vladimir Kramnik

Alexander Grischuk

Moscow 2012 (2)

At some stage towards the end of the tournament I was chatting with Levon (Aronian) and Magnus (Carlsen), saying that it was such an interesting tournament and that we understood why: because there was not a single Queen's Gambit! So in this game I was grateful to Sasha for playing the King's Indian, which is always a pleasure. Not because it's a bad opening (although of course it is a bad opening!), but mainly because you can almost always be sure that there will be a full fight on the board. When you play White nowadays, there is always the danger of being neutralized and having a boring draw. So I was pleased that he played the King's Indian, but at the same time I hadn't expected it and I decided to repeat what I had played in the Hoogeveen tournament last October, where I beat Anish Giri.

1.♘f3 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♘g7 4.e4 d6 5.d4 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 ♘c6 8.d5 ♘e7 9.b4 ♘h5 10.g3 f5 11.♘g5 ♘f6



12.♙f3

This is a more or less new concept. There is a lot of theory on 12.f3, one of the main adepts being King Loek, who played it an incredible number of times and got mated quite often. I decided to play 12.♙f3, which I had

prepared for the Candidates', where I played Radjabov and had to find something against the King's Indian. And apparently my preparation was quite good, as I scored two out of two in this line.

The set-up with 12.♙f3 steers in a new direction. It is very similar to the lines with ♖e1 in the Bayonet Attack, which I played with good results for many years. The only difference is that instead of having a rook on e1 White has played g3. This is both good and

'I was chatting with Levon and Magnus, saying that it was such an interesting tournament and that we understood why: because there was not a single Queen's Gambit!'

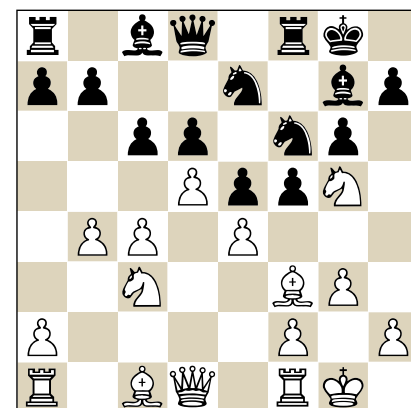
bad, but when preparing for Radjabov I found that it's not so obvious that g3 is worse than ♖e1. But while there are hundreds of games with ♖e1 in this position, there are none with g3.

12...c6

A standard reaction, and the main continuation in the line with ♖e1.

The main justification of 12.♙f3 is that after the critical 12...h6 13.♘e6 ♙xe6 14.dxe6 ♖c8 15.♘d5 ♘exd5 (of course 15...♘fxd5 16.cxd5 just gives White a big plus) 16.exd5 e4 17.♙e2 ♘xd5 18.♖xd5 ♙xa1 19.e7+ ♖f7 20.c5 Black keeps drawing chances, but it's no fun for him. The computer's best line for Black is 20...c6 21.♖xd6

♙g7 22.♙c4, and it's clear that Black will suffer trying to make a draw.



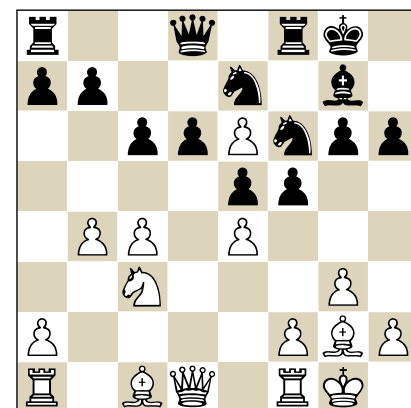
13.♙g2

I won a nice and quick game against Anish (Giri) after 13.♙a3 cxd5 14.exd5 and was very happy with myself, only to realize when I returned to my hotel room that according to my notes I had not intended to play 13.♙a3 (which is not a bad move – I also analysed it, but I am not sure it gives White any advantage) but 13.♙g2! In short, an interesting way to win a game. Fortunately, this time I remembered that my intention was to play 13.♙g2. It looks a bit strange. It is a prophylactic move. True to himself, Alexander was already getting into time-trouble and came up with the most logical move:

13...h6

One of the points of 13.♙g2 is shown in the game. The other is that after 13...cxd5 14.exd5 e4 the bishop is not attacked and I can play a move like 15.♖b3, and this position offers White good prospects.

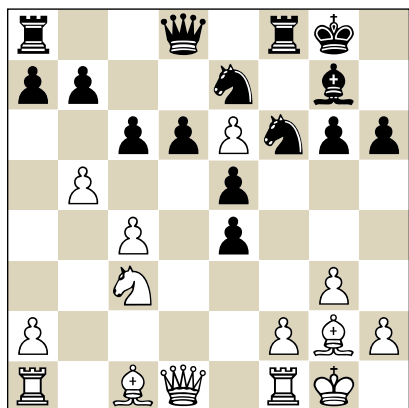
14.♘e6 ♙xe6 15.dxe6



15...♘xe4

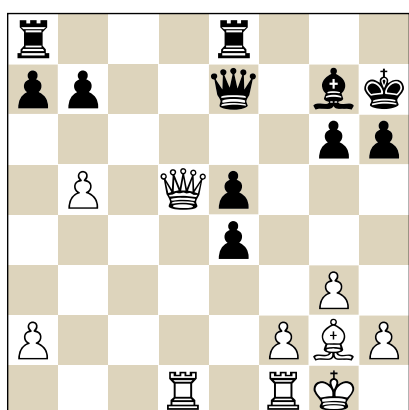
After 15...fxe4 I don't have to take

on e4 twice, when there would be no improvement whatsoever compared to the lines with ♖e1. But I can play 16.b5!, and there is no easy way for Black to equalize:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A) After the logical 16...d5 I have 17. ♖a3 and Black's centre looks frightening but he cannot hold it: 17... ♗e8 18.cxd5 cxd5 19. ♖b3 ♘f5 20.e7! ♘xe7 21. ♗ad1 ♙h7 22. ♖xe7 ♗xe7 23. ♘xd5 ♘xd5 24. ♖xd5



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

and we have reached a kind of dream set-up in the Bayonet Attack, which the reader should keep in mind when looking at further variations of this game;

B) I don't see any clear path to equality either after 16... ♖c8 17.bxc6 bxc6 18. ♖xd6 ♘f5 19. ♖c5 ♗xe6 20. ♘xe4 ♘d4 21. ♖b2 (or 21. ♖e3), and White has a nice positional grip, although the knight on d4 gives Black certain counterplay and chances to equalize;

C) Or 16... ♗e8 17. ♖a3 ♖a5 18. ♖b3 ♘f5 19. ♘xe4 ♘xe4 20. ♖xe4 ♘d4 21. ♖d3, and things are not so simple for Black.



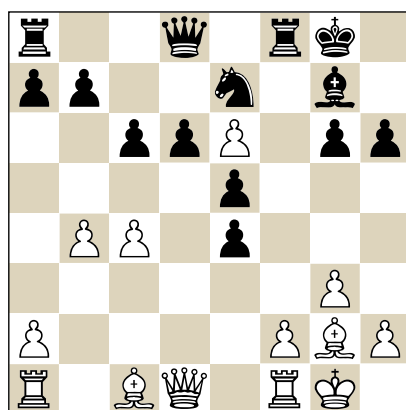
VLADIMIR BARSKY

After his model win against Alexander Grischuk, Vladimir Kramnik was happy to sum up the course of the game for Eteri Kublashvili and the online viewers.

As neither the text-move nor 15...fxe4 seem to equalize, it looks as if Black has to try a slow way to play this position with either 15...a6 or 15... ♘e8 or even 15... ♗c8. Of course, there is room for a lot of analysis here, which I of course already did, but I would prefer not to share all of it here.

16. ♘xe4 fxe4

And here the other point of 13. ♖g2 becomes clear, as I don't have to take back on e4 immediately, but can play:



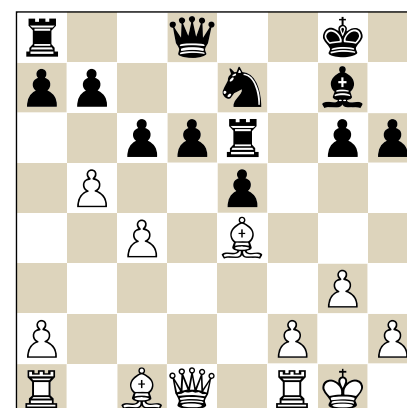
17.b5! ♗f6

Instead, 17...d5 18. ♖a3 wouldn't make much of a difference.

18. ♖xe4 ♗xe6

Black has won a pawn, but it had already been shown in the 1990s that White always has quite serious pressure on the light squares in this kind of position. This was quite a revela-

tion at the time and the reason why the Bayonet Attack became so popular, not least, without false modesty, thanks to my own attempts. This is not so easy to play for Black. Whenever he takes with the rook on e6, this rook will be misplaced.



19. ♖a4

This is where my preparation ended. White has nice pressure and I decided to play this rather direct move. But there are other moves that make sense, such as 19. ♗b1.

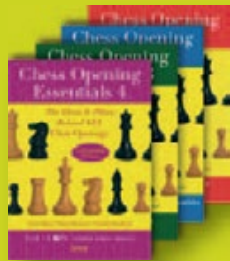
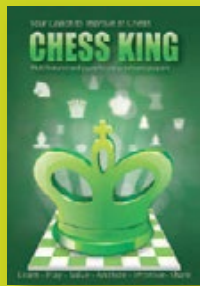
I didn't like the immediate 19. ♖b3, when Black will not go for ...d5, but play 19... ♗c8 20. ♗d1 ♘f5, and he is more or less doing alright with the knight coming to d4.

Another option was 19.bxc6 bxc6 20. ♖a3 (stopping ...d5 forever) 20... ♖c7 21. ♖d3, and although Black is a pawn

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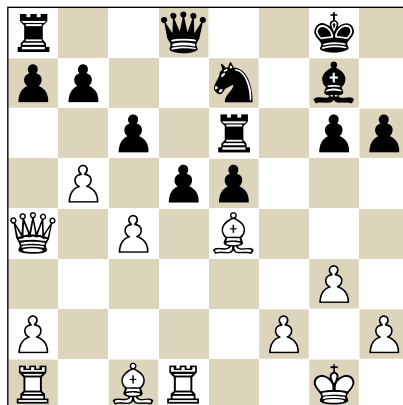
up, this position is far more pleasant to play for White.

19...d5

Black tries to free himself immediately. After the game Alexander told me he didn't like his position too much and didn't want to get under slow positional pressure after 19...♔d7 20.bxc6 bxc6 21.♖b1, when ...d5 is stopped and White threatens things like ♗a6, followed by ♖b7, and has pleasant long-term compensation.

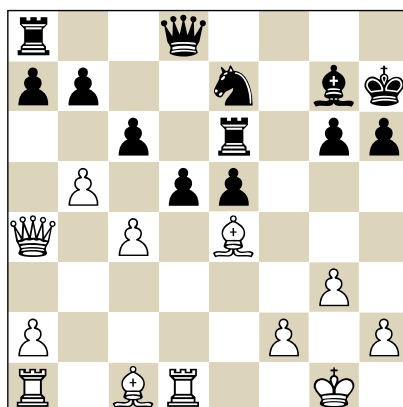
20.♖d1

This is inaccurate. Better was 20.cxd5 cxd5 21.♖d1, when Black probably has nothing better than transposing to the game with 21...♔h7.



20...♔h7

Better was 20...d4, which looks unattractive, as my bishop on e4 becomes a bomb in this position, but after 21. bxc6 bxc6 22.♖b1 White has decent compensation for the pawn, although it will not be easy to make progress. Alexander told me that he didn't like the look of this at all, but things aren't that easy.



21.cxd5

Taking the opportunity to correct my inaccuracy.

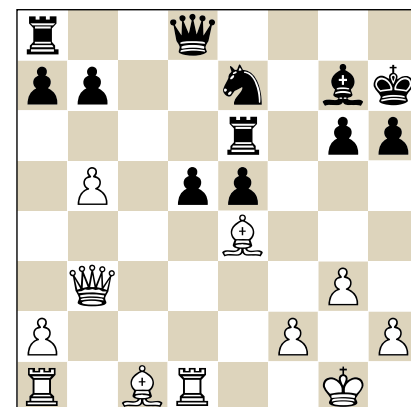
My move is more adventurous than 21.bxc6 bxc6 22.♗a3, which the computer likes at the beginning, and after 22...♗e8 23.♗xe7 dxe4 24.♗c5 things are still not great for Black. He still has to work hard to make a draw. Under other circumstances I might have gone for this, but by now I felt that my position was already worth more. There was no reason to sell my shares cheaply.

21...cxd5

21...♗xd5 22.bxc6 bxc6 23.♖b1 was not really an option. His pawn structure is ruined and his position looks so ugly.

22.♗b3

Before making this move I had to calculate quite a few variations and it seems that this time, uncharacteristically, I was quite accurate.



22...♖b6?!

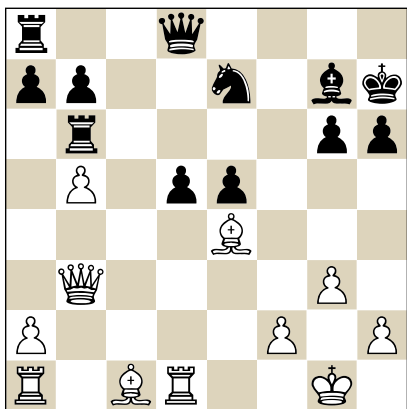
This is almost the decisive mistake. After this move his position becomes really difficult. I don't see any clear way for him to equalize, but there were better tries.

He could have played 22...♗d7, but after 23.♗a3 d4 24.♖ac1 the computer already gives a considerable plus for White, even though he is a pawn down. I start invading the c-file and Black is almost paralysed.

I spent quite a lot of time calculating 22...♖f6. It seems we calculated more or less the same lines and it appears that White is in time after 23.♗a3 (Black will probably hold after 23. ♗xd5 ♖d6) 23...♗b6, and now, as I rechecked a couple of times, I can play 24.♗xe7 ♗xf2+ (on 24...♖xf2 I

have to play the brave 25. ♖xd5, and the discovered check 25... ♔d2+ won't work because of 26. ♖c5) 25. ♖h1 dxe4 26. ♙xf6 ♖xf6 27. ♖f1, and Black's position is pretty bad.

In view of all this, Black's best bet probably was 22... ♖c8, but after 23. ♙xd5 ♘xd5 24. ♖xd5 e4 25. ♖b1 White keeps a very pleasant plus. He follows up with ♙e3, ♖c1 or ♖ad1 and Black will suffer for the rest of the game.



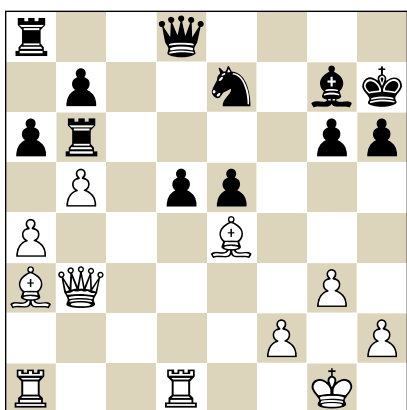
23.a4!

A very important move.

23...a6 As after 23...d4 24.a5 he will lose the pawn on b7.

24.♙a3

I think Sasha had missed or underestimated this move.



24...axb5

Probably the only way to stay in the game was 24... ♖e8, a trick I didn't consider during the game. I don't know if it saves the game, but there are certain drawing chances after 25. ♙c5 axb5 26. ♙xb6 bxa4 27. ♖a2 dxe4 28. ♖e6, and now there is nothing better for Black than to go for quite a dif-

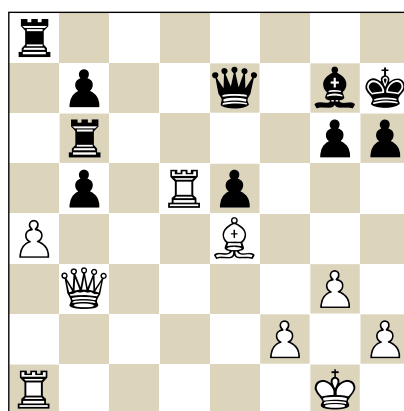
ficult endgame with 28... ♘f5 29. ♖xe8 ♖xe8 30. ♖xa4 ♘d4.

25.♙xe7 ♖xe7 26.♖xd5

Once again, we see White's dream position. I no longer saw any acceptable way for Black to play. The same

'It was a smooth and instructive game, which I may include in my book *How to Win against the King's Indian*.'

went for Alexander, who was in his usual time-trouble, which in his case doesn't mean much, as often he even starts playing better in time-trouble.



26...b4

Perhaps the decisive mistake, but also after the computer recommendation 26... ♖a5 the position is very bad: 27.h4 (his king is coming under attack, while his rooks are completely pinned) 27... ♖f6 (as 27...h5 cannot be played because of 28. ♖d1 ♖xa4 29. ♖xa4 bxa4 30.h5 ♘h8 31. hxc6 ♖e6 32. ♖xa4, and White still has to play accurately to win this, but Black's position is pretty bad.

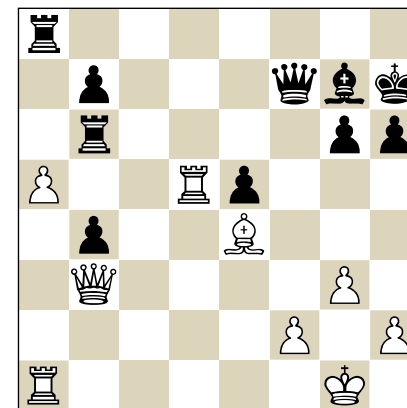
27.a5

Now it's all over.

27...♖f7

Sasha was running down to half a minute, but there is no way to coordinate his pieces and save the game.

After 27... ♖c6 28. ♖b5 ♖c3 29. ♖b1 I will take both b-pawns and promote my a-pawn.

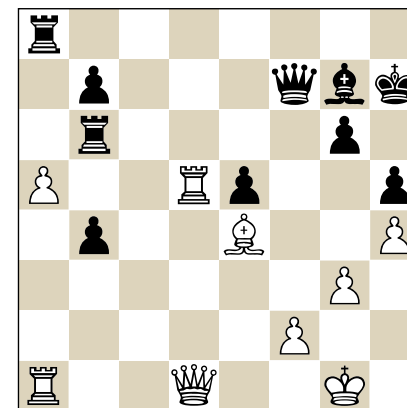


28.h4!

Not very difficult, but quite cute.

28...h5 As 28... ♘h8 fails to 29. ♖d8+ ♖xd8 30. ♖xf7. By playing ...h5 himself, Black stops White's h5, but it runs into a complete killer:

29.♖d1



With three winning threats: 30.axb6, 30. ♖xh5+ and 30. ♖d7.

Sasha had gone down to five seconds on his clock and without making a move he resigned. The right moment, as the computer already showed +4 or something, which normally is enough for me. It was a smooth and instructive game, which at some stage in the future I may include in my book *How to Win against the King's Indian*. I won quite a lot of games against the King's Indian and this was a nice model game for how to play this Bayonet-type of position.



NOTES BY

Alexander Morozevich

SL 6.1 – D31

Levon Aronian

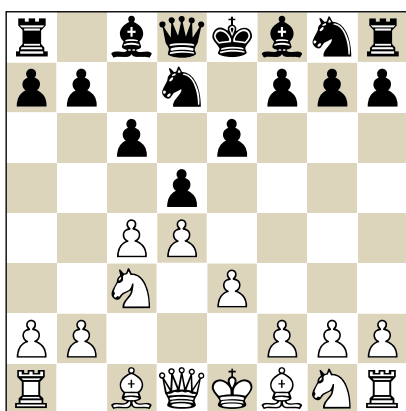
Alexander Morozevich

Moscow 2012 (5)

This year's Tal Memorial turned out to be very vivid and memorable, with an unusually high number of decisive results for an event of this standard, and a mass of games that concluded unexpectedly and not always logically. The main 'trouble-makers' in this affair were McShane and myself. The former ended up in the tournament accidentally, thanks to a vote on the Russian Chess Federation website. I also ended up in the tournament accidentally, thanks to the rotation of Russian players. In my humble view, the two accidental participants demonstrated the best and most interesting play, to the joy of those who value beauty and art in chess.

My meeting in the 5th round with another outstanding artist, whose play in Moscow was slightly less successful, was one that I awaited with great impatience. Everyone was expecting a grand battle, and we succeeded in producing one!

1.d4 d5 2.c4 e6 3.♘c3 c6 4.e3 ♘d7

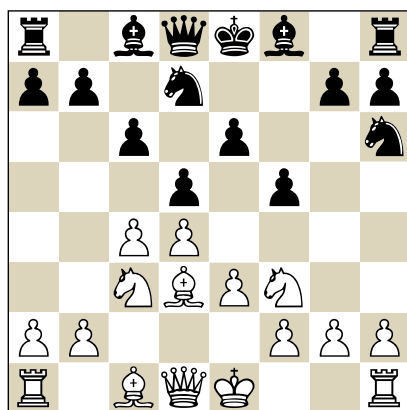


A developing move, but one which looks somehow strange and extravagant. A week before the tournament I finished reading Scherbakov's excellent opening monograph *The Bermuda Triangle*, in which 4...♘d7 is

accompanied by a double exclamation mark and in general it is written that this is a clever way to proceed. This is probably so, but I had to work out the subtleties at the board.

5.♗f3 f5 6.♙d3 ♗h6

For the moment all according to the book.



7.b3

Exploiting the absence of the knight from e4, the plan with 7.0-0 ♙d6 8.

‘Everyone was expecting a grand battle, and we succeeded in producing one!’

♖b1 followed by a rapid b4-b5 came into consideration.

7...♙d6 8.♙b2 0-0 9.0-0

A standard set-up for White with the black knight on f6/e4. With his knight on h6 Black acquires additional ideas.

9...♖f6

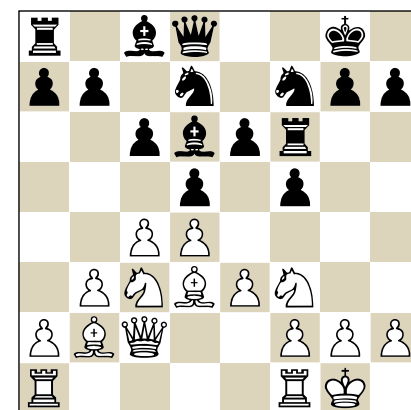
An impudent move and most probably not correct, but on the other hand, perhaps it will be possible to give a quick mate?!

10.♙c2

Displaying amazing calm. 10.♗e2 looks far more understandable.

10...♗f7

The time has come for White to commit himself.



11.♗d2

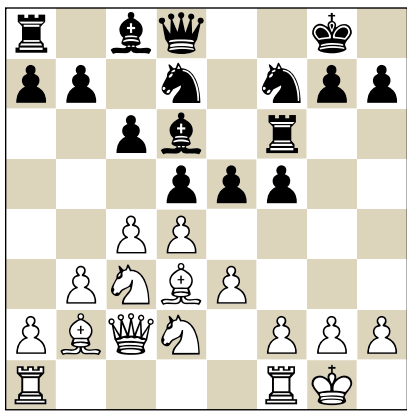
White is as though teasing his opponent: with the d6-bishop aiming at his king, and the f6-rook lined up against it, White removes first his queen, and then his knight. White's position is solid enough to escape immediate problems, but from the standpoint of fighting for an advantage the idea of setting up a barrier with f2-f4 and blocking the position does not look the most promising.

The prophylactic 11.g3 would not have halted 11...♖h6 – after 12.cxd5 exd5 13.♙xf5 ♗f6 intending ...♙xf5, ...♖h5 and ...♙d7-h3 Black has a strong initiative.

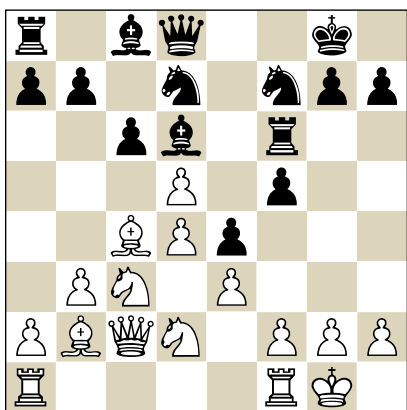
Immediately determining the position in the centre came into consideration: 11.cxd5!? exd5 12.♗e2 ♙e7. Here with 13.♗g3 the reply 13...g6 can be provoked, removing many attacking ideas, although on the whole Black has a solid position and the outcome of the opening is more pleasant for him.

After 11.♗d2 it was now the time for me to take a serious decision – whether to agree to the manoeuvring play after the possible 11...♖h6 12.f4 ♗f6 13.♗f3, or choose the audacious 11...e5, engaging in a hand-to-hand fight. Doubts about whether Black could permit himself such a 'liberty', together with my inability to calculate variations three moves ahead led to a forty-minute stupor. Intuition came to my aid: in two minutes it took the decision that 11...e5 was 'positionally justified' and that I needed to push forward!

11...e5 (42 minutes!)



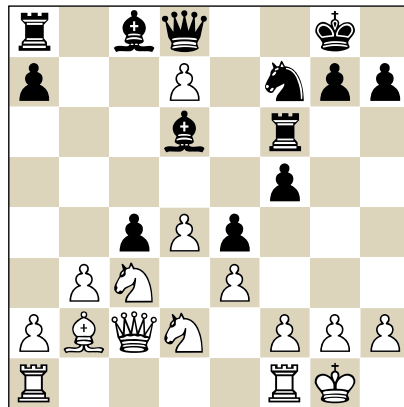
12. ♖xf5 Surprisingly, despite the fact that the computer gives preference to White after 12.cxd5, 12.g3 and 12. ♖xf5, and in this order of assessment, I am not at all inclined to consider Levon's choice incorrect, since we will see that essentially after any continuation White has to choose from completely unclear positions, each with some degree of risk for him. We will begin with the simple: 12.cxd5 (taking what is on offer) 12...e4 13. ♖c4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

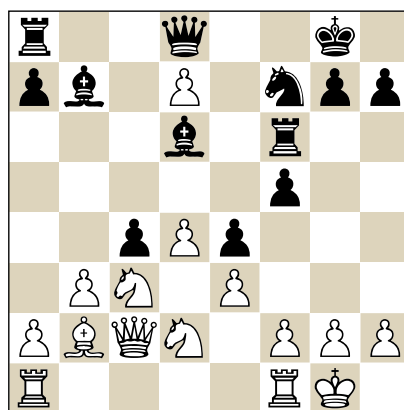
13...b5!. This was after analysis. During the game I was intending 13... ♖xh2+ 14. ♖xh2 ♖h6+ 15. ♖g1 ♖h4 16.f3 ♖f6, assuming that after this the attack would somehow develop. Let us continue: 17.dxc6 f4! (an excellent computer move) 18. ♖ae1 ♖g4 19.fxc4 ♖h2+ 20. ♖f2 ♖g3+ 21. ♖e2 ♖xg4+ 22. ♖f3 exf3+ 23. ♖d2 f2 24. ♖e2 ♖xe2 25. ♖xe2! ♖e8 26. ♖d1 and White wins. An annoyingly straightforward variation. The alternative 13... ♖h6 is more interesting; for example, after 14.f4 ♖h4 15.h3 c5 Black retains practical compensation.

After 13... b5! 14.dxc6 (after 14. ♖e2 the sacrifice 14... ♖xh2+ leads to a draw in a lengthy and fantastic variation) 14...bxc4 15.cxd7 Black has a broad choice:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

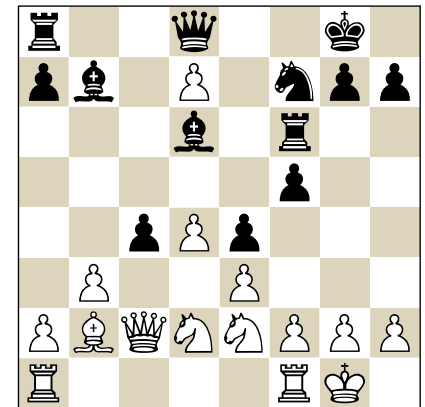
15... ♖b7!? (this is obviously stronger than 15... ♖xd7, 15... ♖a6 or 15... ♖h6, but 15... ♖xd7 intending 16. ♖xc4 ♖h6 17.h3 ♖g5 deserves consideration. 15... ♖b7 leads to an original position, in which at first sight, and in the view of the computer, White's advantage is obvious, but with every move it becomes increasingly more difficult to demonstrate this) 16. ♖e2!?. One of the most serious attempts. We will briefly analyse the alternatives:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

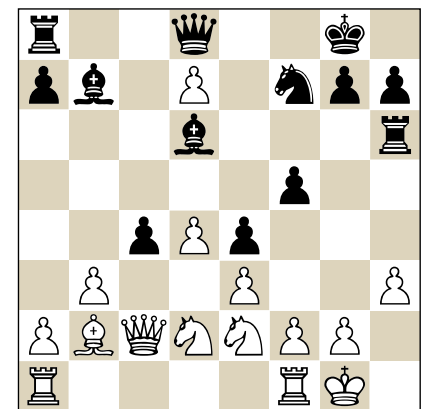
- A) 16.bxc4 ♖xh2+! 17. ♖xh2 ♖h6+ 18. ♖g1 f4, with attack;
- B) 16. ♖fc1 ♖h6 17.h3 ♖g6, with attack;
- C) 16.f4!? exf3 17. ♖xf3 cxb3 18. axb3 ♖xd7, when Black's activity is sufficient to maintain the balance;
- D) 16.h3 ♖g6 17.f4 exf3 18. ♖xf3 ♖g5 is unclear;
- E) 16.g3 cxb3 17.axb3 ♖xd7 18. ♖a3 ♖xa3 19. ♖xa3 ♖g5!, with attack.

Of course, these variations are illustrative and are not exhaustive, but nevertheless they reveal well the potential of Black's position. Let us return to 16. ♖e2!?:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

16... ♖h6 17.h3 ♖g5 18. ♖xc4+ ♖h8 19. ♖fc1 ♖xd7 20. ♖a4 ♖e6! (stronger than 20... ♖f7) 21.d5 ♖xd5 22. ♖d4 ♖g8, and in this unusual position numerous wins are possible.

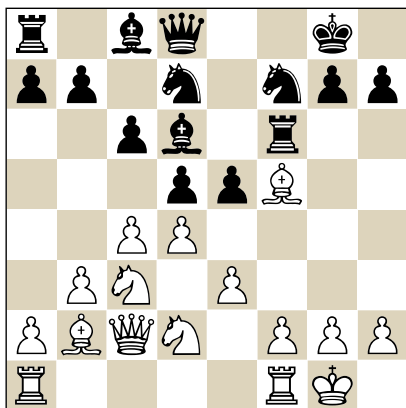


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM AFTER 17.h3

Looking at the position anew, I discovered that 17... ♖xd7 is possibly even stronger: 18. ♖xc4 (18.bxc4 ♖g5 and White may not be able to hold out) 18... ♖c8!, and to 19. ♖d2 or 19. ♖d1 Black responds in the same way: 19... ♖xc4 20.bxc4 ♖g5, with a serious attack. Thus on the whole this is the correct approach, and in the given concrete position 'taking what is on offer' is not altogether justified. The other prophylactic move – 12.g3 – also demanded an accurate response: 12...e4 13. ♖e2 ♖g6! (13... ♖b4 14.cxd5 ♖xc3 15. ♖xc3, when White is slightly better, is too depressing) 14.cxd5 (14. ♖h5 ♖h6 – even 14... ♖f6 gives Black quite good compen-

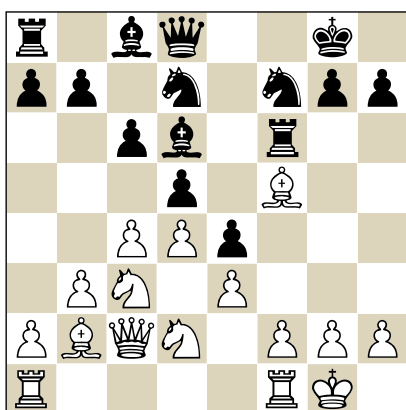
sation – 15. ♖xf7+ ♔xf7 and White faces problems) 14... ♖h4, and after the approximate 15. ♖fc1 ♘f6 16. dxc6 bxc6 the position is completely unclear.

12.dxe5?! merely plays into Black's hands – 12... ♗dxe5 13. ♗e2 ♖h6.



12...e4

During the game I thought that 12... ♖xf5 would force a draw, but I wanted to fight on and so I chose the move played. But in reality after 13. ♖xf5 e4 White captures with the 'correct' knight – 14. ♗cxe4! (I only calculated 14. ♖h5 ♗f6 15. ♖e2 ♗xh2+! 16. ♗xh2 ♗g4+ and Black wins, and 14. ♗dxe4 dxe4 15. ♖xe4 ♗g5 when after 16. ♖c2 Black has 16... ♗f3+ with perpetual check) 14... ♗c5 15. ♗f6+ gxf6 16. ♖c2 and White's position is preferable.



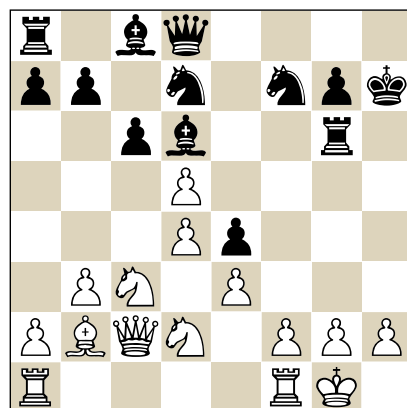
13. ♗xh7+

A sensible fighting choice. After 13. ♗xd7 ♗xd7 14.f4! (if 14.cxd5, then 14... ♗xh2+ gives a draw, but other possibilities also have to be calculated) 14... ♗e6! this position is easier for Black to play. Fortunately for him, the obvious sacrifice 15. ♗dxe4 dxe4 16. ♗xe4 ♖h6 17. ♗xd6 ♗xd6 18.e4

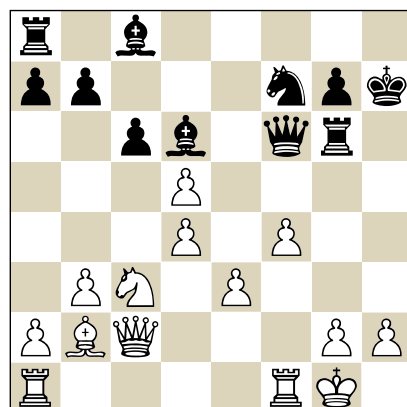
meets with 18... ♗xe4!, when Black is completely alright. Otherwise White has a kind of not very regular French.

13... ♗xh7 14.cxd5 ♖g6

I thought that this was almost the only move and I made it quite quickly. But both 14... ♖c7!?, suggested by Levon at the press conference after the game, and 14... ♖h6 were quite sensible alternatives.



15. ♗dxe4 ♗f6 16. ♗xf6+ ♖xf6 17.f4



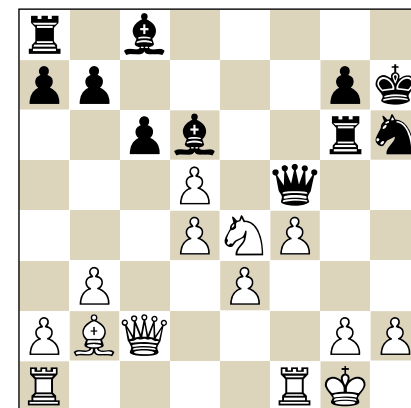
Practically by force we have arrived at the next important position, since for the first time Black has a wide choice. During the game, not without reason, each of us overestimated his position, which will explain many of our decisions and inaccuracies. To try and assess such a position correctly during a game, and on the basis of this decide on the immediate aims, then candidate moves, and also calculate them correctly – this is possible only in books! In reality everything is simpler. White's plan is clear – to advance his pawn centre. If he is able to do this in comfort, his advantage will be undisputed. Black's objective is to prevent this, and at the same time try

and bring out his pieces to their most active positions.

From these considerations the first continuation that comes to mind is 17... ♗h3 18. ♖f2 ♖e8 19.e4 (not essential, but logical moves) 19... ♖xd4 20. ♗h1, and on failing to find a direct tactical blow, I considered this position to be favourable for White. However, after 20... ♗d7 it is not easy to understand what in fact is happening and who is better.

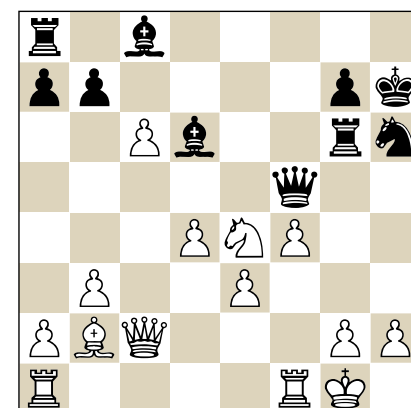
The quiet development 17... ♗d7 is also good, since it is not easy for White to advance his pawns. The ambitious move in the game is less harmonious, since it combines to a lesser degree the two objectives: development and activity.

17... ♗h6?! 18. ♗e4! ♖f5



19.dxc6

I did not consider this simple move, but I kept checking cooperative lines such as 19. ♗g5+ ♖xg5 20.e4 ♖h3 21. e5+ ♖f5 etc.



19... ♗e7?

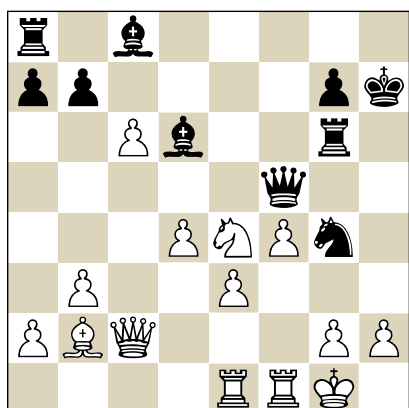
This move is easily explained, but in principle it is a bad choice to change strategy and give up playing for activity. One bad move (17... ♗h6?!)



Alexander Morozevich on his game against Levon Aronian: 'My meeting in the 5th round with another outstanding artist was one that I awaited with great impatience.'

gave rise to the next one, figuratively speaking.

I considered the correct move 19... ♘g4, and I even saw that after 20. ♖f3 there is the sacrifice 20... ♘xe3, when I even hit on 21. ♖xe3 ♗xf4 22. ♖g3 ♘f5. This is correct in general and it is even difficult for White (23.cxb7 ♖e8! 24. ♘xd6 ♘xc2 25. ♘xe8 ♖xg3 26.hxg3 ♗e3+ 27. ♖h2 ♘e4! 28. b8♗ ♗e2 and Black wins), but after 20. ♖ae1 I could not find any ways to develop my initiative, and a happy future for the h6-knight was conclusively ruled out. Meanwhile, the problem-like



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

20... ♖g8!! would have left all the questions open: 21.h3 ♖e6 22.hxg4 ♗xe4 is unclear; 21. ♖e2 ♘f8 22.h3 ♖xc6 is clearly better for Black; 22. ♗c4+ ♘e6

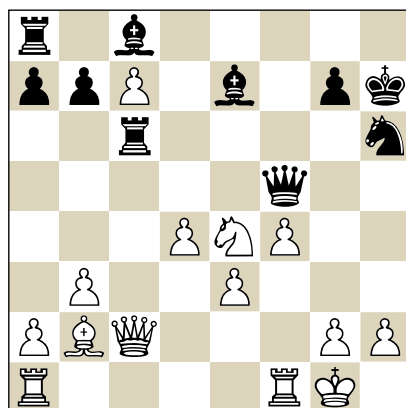
23.cxb7 ♘xc4 24.bxa8♗ ♘xe2 25. ♖e1 ♘f3 with a black edge; 21. ♗c4+ ♘e6 22.cxb7 ♖b8 23. ♗c6 ♘d5 24. ♘g3 ♘xc6 25. ♘xf5 ♘xg2 26. ♘h4 ♘xf1 27. ♘xg6 ♘a6 is again unclear; finally, 21.d5 bxc6 22.dxc6 ♘a6 23.h3 ♖e8 and again Black is alright.

The difference between 20... ♖g8 and the more 'human' 20... ♖h8 is revealed in the variation 20... ♖h8 21.d5 bxc6 22. ♗xc6 ♗xe4 23. ♗xa8 ♘xe3 24. ♗xc8+ and wins – with the king on h8 White has a tempo-gaining check on h3, but with the king on g8 he does not, and after 24... ♘f8 it is the end for White.

20.c7!

Now White's advantage is obvious.

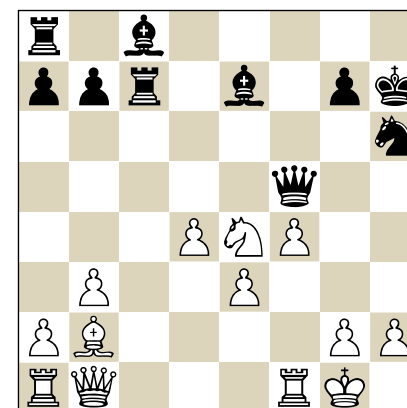
20... ♖c6



21. ♗b1? After brilliantly conducting the difficult section from the

12th to the 20th move, on practically even ground Levon unexpectedly began playing incorrectly. The simple 21. ♗d3 ♖xc7 22. ♖ac1 would have left White with an obvious advantage, and, also important, given him a much easier game in the approaching time scramble.

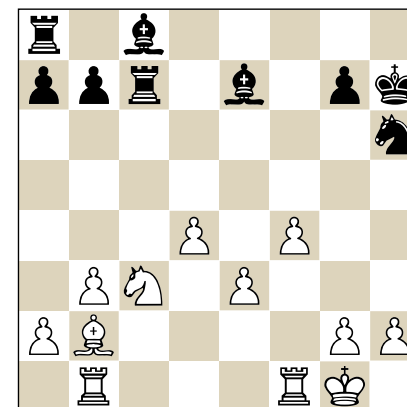
21... ♖xc7



22. ♘c3?

Apparently it was for this that 21. ♗b1 was played. But in principle the exchange of queens does not frighten Black – it has not become much easier for the white pawns to advance, and on the other hand the black king is not in danger of coming under attack. After the active moves 22.d5 or 22. ♘g5+ Black would have had to play accurately to avoid an immediate collapse, and in any case White would have retained a definite advantage.

22... ♗xb1 23. ♖axb1

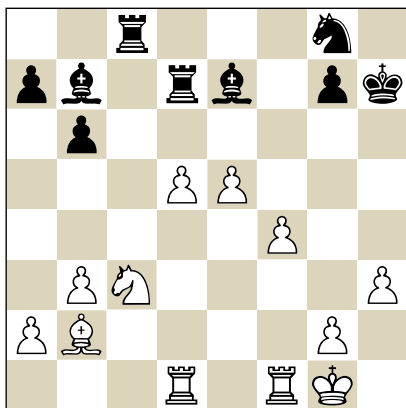


23... ♖d7! Preparing the development of the bishop at its optimum post b7. Objectively the position is still roughly equal, but in the approaching time scramble it is much easier for Black to play. White's only sensible plan of advancing his pawns

involves the considerable risk of blundering one of them ☺.

24. ♖bd1 b6 25. e4 ♘b7 26. h3 ♜g8 27. e5 ♝c8 28. d5

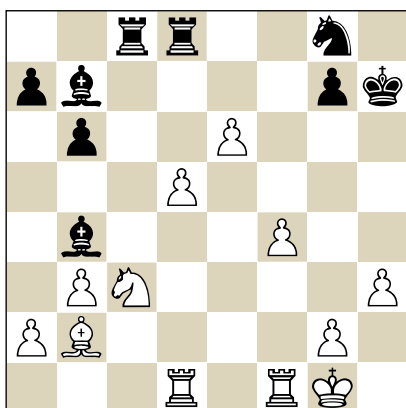
I was expecting the more cautious 28. ♝f2. The move in the game came as a pleasant surprise to me.



28... ♘b4 I no longer had the strength to work out the subtleties of whether or not the check on c5 was needed. I simply made the first sensible move that occurred to me.

29. e6 The first step towards the precipice. After 29. d6 ♘xc3 30. ♘xc3 ♝xc3 31. e6 ♜d8 32. e7 ♞xe7 33. dxe7 ♜e8 34. ♜d7 White should be able to hold on. Strangely enough, 29. ♝f3 ♞e7 30. f5 is also acceptable.

29... ♜dd8

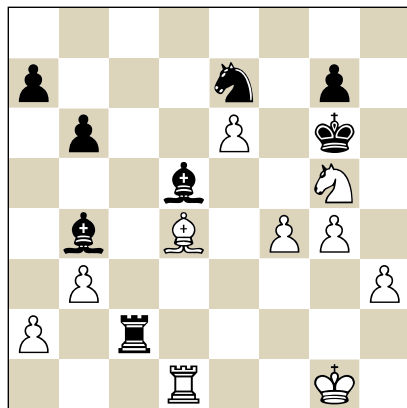


30. ♞e4? This involves some kind of mirage. After the unaesthetic 30. ♝f3 there would still have been all to play for and, most important, Black would have had to think.

30... ♝xd5

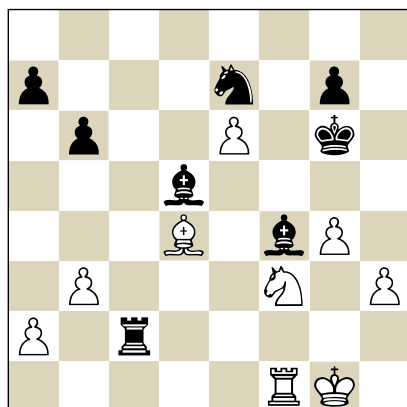
Now all Black's pieces are at last in play and it is he who assumes the attack! Playing at 30 seconds a move, it is unrealistic for White to hold such a position.

31. ♞g5+ ♔g6 32. ♝xd5 ♘xd5 33. ♜d1 ♞e7 34. ♘d4 ♝c2 35. g4



35... ♘d2! The most accurate. After 36. f5+ ♔xg5 37. ♝xd2 ♝xd2 38. ♘e3+ ♔h4 39. ♘xd2 ♔xh3 the king eats up all the white pawns.

36. ♝f1 ♘c1 37. ♞f3 ♘xf4



Now it is all over. Through time-trouble inertia there followed three more moves, and after

38. ♞h4+ ♔g5 39. ♞f3+ ♔h6 40. h4 ♝xa2 White resigned.

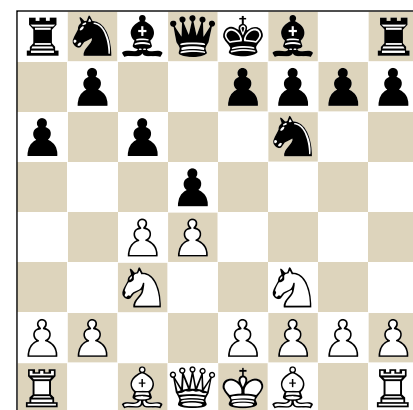


NOTES BY
Luke McShane

SL 3.1 – D15
Levon Aronian
Luke McShane
Moscow 2012 (3)

Coming on the heels of two losses, this win provided a huge psychological boost for my tournament, but also from an aesthetic point of view I was unusually pleased with it.

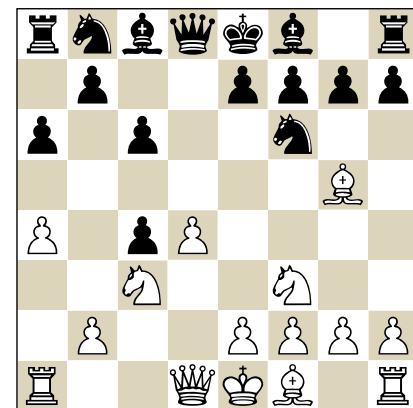
1. d4 d5 2. ♞f3 ♞f6 3. c4 c6 4. ♞c3 a6



5. ♘g5

Levon played 5. ♝b3 against me at the London Classic six months earlier. Like 5. ♝b3, 5. ♘g5 is a comparatively rare move in this position, and although I had looked at it, I forgot what Black was 'supposed' to do, and decided to improvise.

5... dxc4 6. a4

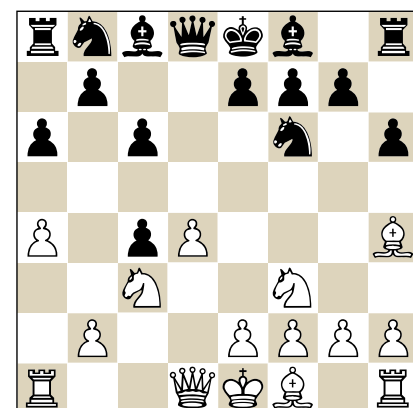


6... h6!

I considered some other options, but I think this was a good reaction, preparing an exchange sacrifice by kicking the bishop off the g5-d2 diagonal.

7. ♘h4

7. ♘xf6 exf6 looks comfortable enough for Black (compared with a Trompowsky, perhaps) as White has weakened the b4-square.



7...b5

It turns out that 7...e6 would transpose to the famous game Van Wely-Topalov from Wijk aan Zee 2006. At the board I could only remember the rough contours of that game, but recalling the style with which Topalov won gave me confidence to sacrifice the exchange, which is not an easy decision when you're on 0/2.

I think it was an accurate decision to play 7...b5 first, for two reasons. Firstly, 7...e6 8.e4 was a position I was unfamiliar with.

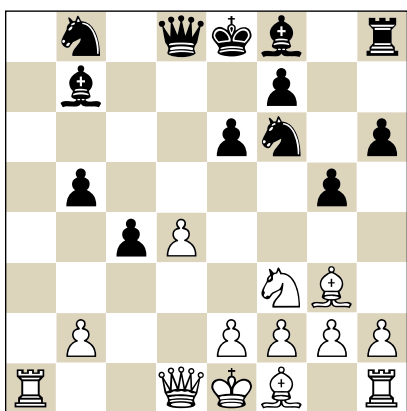
Secondly, after 7...e6 8.e3 b5 9.axb5 cxb5 10.♙xf6 gxf6 11.♘xb5 axb5 12.♖xa8 ♙b4+ etc. as in the Van Wely-Topalov game, the Dutchman was able to insert the exchange on f6, which I thought probably helps White, although Topalov won a great game anyway. Of course, since Topalov reached the position via 7...dxc4, he had less options than I did here.

8.axb5 cxb5 9.♘xb5

9.♙xf6 exf6! will bring the bishop to b4 even quicker, so this wasn't an option for White.

9...axb5 10.♖xa8 ♙b7 11.♖a1 g5 12.♙g3 e6

It's an important detail that despite an extra tempo, there's still no better response to ...♙b4+ than the awkward ♙e2 arrangement.

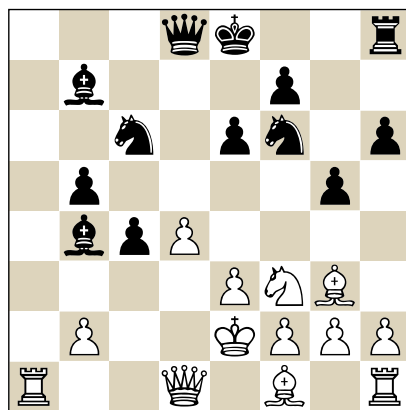


13.e3 ♙b4+ 14.♙e2 ♘c6

I remembered Topalov used the manoeuvre ...♘c6-a5-b3 in his game. Probably White's position is not worse in theory, but in practice it's easier to handle the black side.



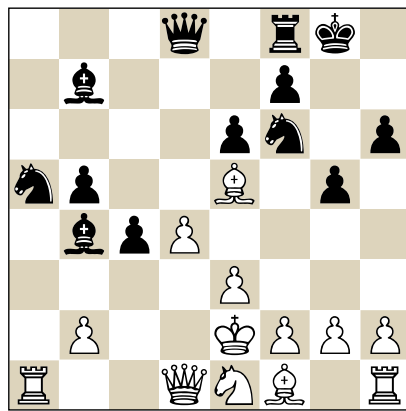
Luke McShane: 'Coming on the heels of two losses, this win provided a huge psychological boost, but also from an aesthetic point of view I was unusually pleased with it.'



15.♘e1

15.♘e5 is the move I was concentrating on during the game, but I remember noticing that something like 15...♘a5 16.f3 ♘b3 17.♖b1 ♘d5 18.♙f2 ♙d2! is a typical way to cause trouble before White unravels.

15...♘a5 16.♙e5 0-0

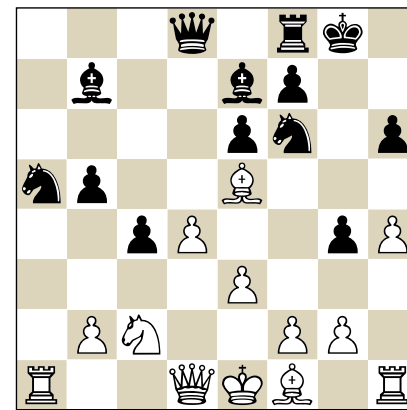


17.h4

It was possible to exchange a couple of

sets of minor pieces, but after 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6 18.♘c2 ♙e7 19.♘xb4 ♙xb4 White still has problems, as 20.♙d2? runs into a fork. So 20.♙c2 ♘b3 21.♖a7 ♖b8 and with ...e5 to follow Black's counterplay endures.

17...g4 18.♘c2 ♙e7 19.♙e1

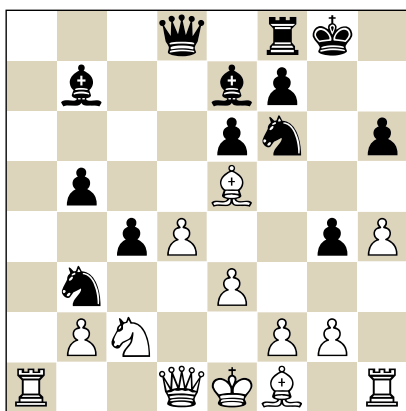


19...♘b3

I remember it being a difficult decision whether to play this immediately, or defend the pawn on g4.

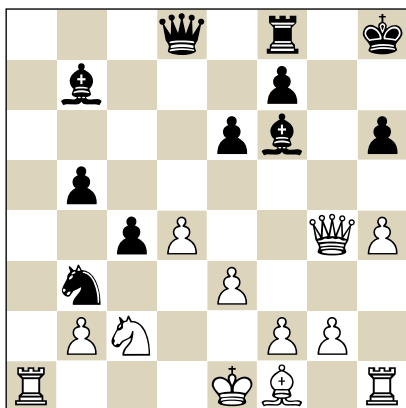
I believe the line which worried me after 19...h5 was the counter-sacrifice 20.f3 ♘b3 21.♖a7 ♙b6 22.♖xb7 ♙xb7 23.♙e2, when I saw a lot of counterplay on the light squares. However, it looks like Black can snuff that out with 23...♘d7! followed by ...f5, with advantage. Therefore, I suspect this was a more accurate way

to play, although White had better options along the way.



20. ♖a2 It looks positionally naive to exchange the dark-squared bishop for the sake of a pawn and a check on g4. But after analysing for a while, I suspect that was the best option.

20. ♗xf6 ♗xf6 21. ♔xg4+ ♖h8 was the extra possibility I chose to allow, instead of the counter-sacrifice on the previous move. White has won a pawn, but Black's king is not really exposed, and giving up White's bishop is quite a concession.



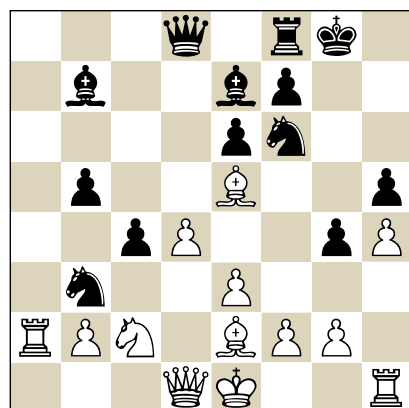
ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now 22. ♖a3, and after Black breaks with 22...e5, the game is complex but I feel White is doing alright (although

the difficulties are well illustrated by an alternative line: 22. ♖a7 ♗b6 23. ♖xb7 ♗xb7 24. ♗e2, which superficially looks comfortable for White, but after the simple 24... ♗a6!, with ideas of ... ♗a5+ or ... ♗a2, the inability to castle is a real nuisance!).

20...h5 21. ♗e2

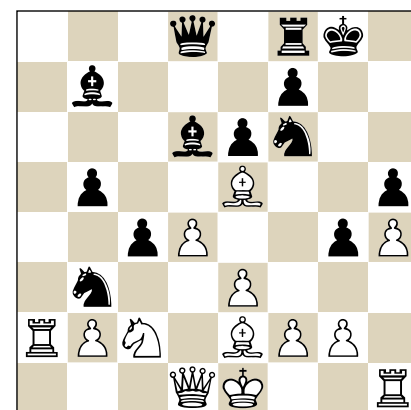
21.f3!? might have been better played immediately, although after 21... ♗d7 22. ♗g3 f5 I still prefer Black.



21... ♗d6

My approach to the position was that, although White is partly untangled, the inability to castle is still a nuisance. So I had no intention of activating the rook myself by capturing on g2 and inviting play down the g-file, especially since I saw that the move I played promised good play in the centre.

However, my computer wants to play 21... ♗xg2 22. ♖g1 ♗h3!?, which is an interesting alternative: g4 is well secured, and although the bishop on h3 looks a bit odd, it does deprive the king of some oxygen. Nevertheless, after the text-move I can't find anything really satisfactory for White.

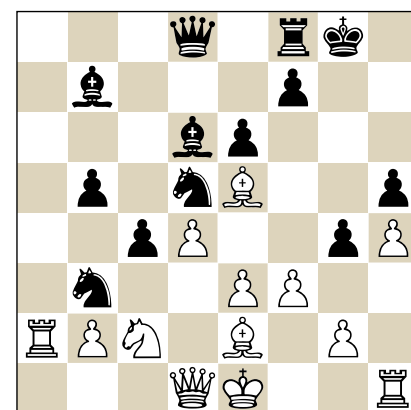


22.f3

22. ♖a7!? might have been a good try to stir up trouble. My computer thinks that ♗xg2-h3 is still pretty strong in this position, but I would probably have preferred 22... ♗e4, although I hadn't appreciated that a key tactical point works in Black's favour: 23.f3 ♗xc2 24. ♗xc2 ♗xe5 25.dxe5 ♗b8! 26. ♖xf7!? ♗xf7 27.exf6 ♗g3+ 28. ♗f1 ♗xf6, with a big advantage.

22... ♗d5

22... ♗xe5 23.dxe5 ♗d5 was more forcing, but I was trying to avoid the exchange of queens after 24.e4 ♗f4 25. ♗xd8 ♖xd8. In fact, White is in terrible trouble there as well.



23.f3

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Truth be told, I'm not sure where the decisive mistake is in this game, but after this I'm confident Black is winning. Still, the alternatives don't look great.

– 23.f4 ♖f6 prevents any funny business on g4, and White's position is terribly ugly.

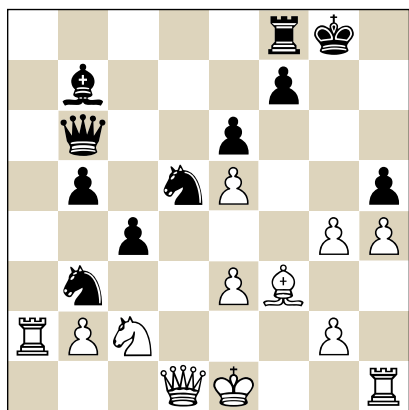
– 23.♙xd6 might have been the lesser evil, but after 23...♙xd6 24.♙f2 f5 White is still in a bind.

23...♙xe5 24.dxe5 ♙b6

At the time it wasn't clear to me that this was stronger than 24...♙c7, but this felt more direct and I didn't have a lot of time to choose.

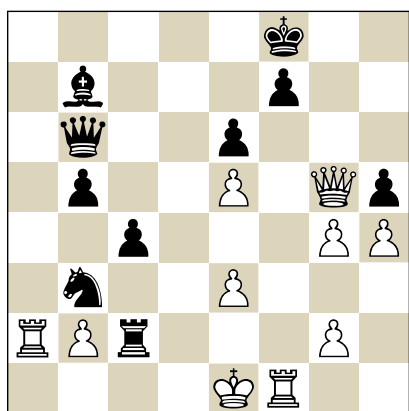
25.♙f3

25.♙f2 ♙d8 is followed by ...♙f4 and ...♙d2.



25...♙xe3

25...♙d8 26.♙xd5 ♙xd5 27.♙f3 ♙d2 28.♙f6 ♙xc2 29.♙g5+ ♙f8 30.♙f1 looked far from simple to me during the game, as White has protected e3 and threatens ♙h6+ etc.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

The computer points out that 30...c3!! is absolutely winning, but that assessment depends on the line 31.♙h6+ ♙e8 32.♙h8+ ♙d7 33.♙xf7+ ♙c6

34.♙e8+ ♙d5 35.♙d7+ ♙e4 36.♙f4+ ♙xe3, which wins. There was not a chance of my playing that way, and indeed I considered 30...♙c1+ in that line, which was perhaps good enough. However, the move I played

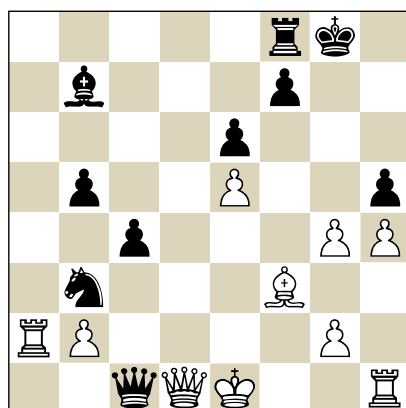
'I didn't seriously consider taking the repetition here. I felt that it would be a miserable waste of an opportunity.'

looked simpler and most probably winning, although I hadn't worked out all the details.

26.♙xe3 ♙xe3+ 27.♙e2

By now I was desperately short of time, and so I threw in a couple of repetitions to gain time on the clock and get closer to move 40. Frankly, I didn't seriously consider taking the repetition here. I felt that it would be a miserable waste of an opportunity, and, more pragmatically, I couldn't see why I shouldn't be winning in the position after 34...♙f4.

27...♙c1+ 28.♙d1 ♙e3+ 29.♙e2 ♙c1+ 30.♙d1



30...♙xf3 31.gxf3

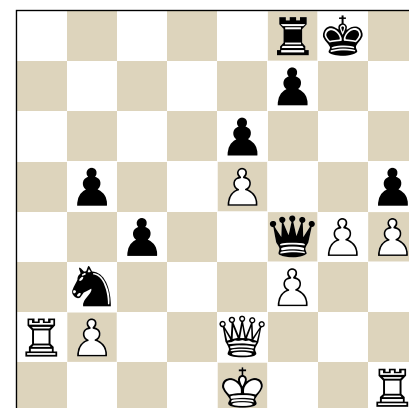
31.♙xc1 ♙xc1 hits the rook on a2, so White can resign.

31...♙e3+ 32.♙e2

32.♙f1 hgx4 33.fgx4 (or 33.♙g1 ♙d2+ 34.♙g2 ♙xf3) 33...♙d2+ 34.♙g2 ♙e4+ 35.♙h3 ♙d3+ 36.♙h2 ♙d8! 37.♙a3 ♙d4 is very strong, although I can't claim to have gotten this far in my calculation.

32...♙c1+ 33.♙d1 ♙e3+ 34.♙e2 ♙f4

The main threat is ...♙d4, while ...♙d8 is coming as well.



35.♙h2?

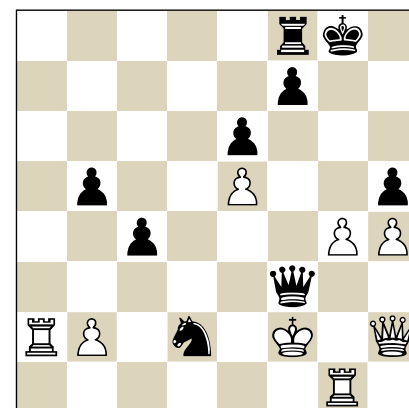
I don't think I calculated it too well, but White is lost after 35.gxh5 ♙d8 36.♙g2+ ♙h7 37.♙g5 ♙d4!.

35.♙f2 was probably the best chance, but 35...♙d8 36.♙d1 ♙h2+ 37.♙e3 ♙xe5+ 38.♙f2 ♙h2+ 39.♙e3 ♙xh4 must be winning for Black.

35...♙xf3 36.♙f1 ♙e4+ 37.♙f2

37.♙e2 ♙b1+ picks off the rook, and the queen will rejoin the fray with check via a7.

37...♙d2 38.♙g1 ♙f3+



White resigned. 39.♙e1 ♙e3+ 40.♙d1 ♙f3 is simple. ■

Magnifying Magnus

H

He likes to read about sport stars. The way they built their careers, the way the forces around them helped them become stars. He has devoured several biographies of Tiger Woods, who revolutionized golf, not only by his unique talent and his successes, but perhaps even more because of the clever strategies of Woods and his team to make the world interested in watching him excel in his sport. Why is it that millions want to watch Woods, when golf was never a big spectator sport? Why is it that cycling is so popular, when for hours nothing much is going on and many races are only decided in the final couple of hundred meters? Why is it that

chess is not as popular as he believes it can be?

‘It’s important to know that the media should be your friends, they are extremely important tools. It’s not enough to be just the best chess player. It’s the media that actually make you a superstar. If you want to make a brand out of yourself as a chess player, it is not enough just to play chess. You need to talk to the media, have interesting stories to tell.’ He adds that the same goes for tournament organizers. They could also do with advice from professional managers. ‘To promote the event and to make it more entertaining. To make sure it is interesting for both the press and the audience. A chess tournament is not just for the players, it’s an event for a world audience and for the media as well. You should keep this in mind when you plan things. And chess can do that quite a lot better than what is happening today.’

Espen Agdestein is Magnus Carlsen’s manager. For the past two years he has accompanied the

number one in the world rankings on most of his trips around the world. Typically, you can see Agdestein sitting in the press or VIP room following the game of his protégé on his iPad. Watching chess live is one of the perks of his job, as he loves chess. He is of master strength himself and has represented Norway at two Olympiads. He admits that watching Carlsen’s games can be nerve-racking, then starts to laugh as he adds: ‘But Magnus very rarely disappoints you. He mostly does better than you expect.’

Still, it wasn’t his love for chess that led to their cooperation. From the early days of the Inter-

Espen Agdestein and his protégé in the streets of Oslo. ‘Magnus very rarely disappoints you. He mostly does better than you expect.’

net boom Agdestein was successfully involved in numerous online ventures in Norway. He worked for the Norwegian branch of Scandinavia Online, the leading Internet company in the Scandinavian countries, and was actively

For a game that is played professionally all around the world, the number of managers active in chess is startlingly low. If we briefly forget about Garry Kasparov, who after all is no longer active as a player, Magnus Carlsen is the only chess pro with a fulltime manager. **Dirk Jan ten Geuzendam** talks to Espen Agdestein about his ambition to turn the young Norwegian into a successful brand and his hopes to have more colleagues. 'Chess is an intellectual sport, and in society today intellectual skills are all that matter. It used to be about being fast, now it's all about the mind. Even with girls, young intellectual guys are much more popular these days.'



involved in creating profitable websites. One of them was *Art of Taste*, a Norwegian website on wine and food, which he developed from an idea into a business. The site was sold in 2005 'with high return for the shareholders'. Between 2005 and 2009 he was a member of the board of executives of Hjemmet Mortensen, the main publisher of weeklies and magazines in Norway, where he was responsible for the online division.

Garry Kasparov

The first time he heard about Magnus was at a Christmas party some nine years ago, when his brother Simen, who at the time was still the number one grandmaster in Norway, spoke about the amazing talent of the 12-year-old boy he was training. Simen also told him that Magnus was going to take a year off from school to travel with his parents and sisters and to play chess, and that it would be good if someone sponsored that trip. Espen called the manager of Microsoft in Norway, explained the situation and the software company ended up sponsoring Magnus' first tour. Espen also helped him with a further sponsor deal three years later and he joined Magnus and his father Henrik ('just for the fun of it') when they went to Moscow to meet Garry Kasparov. This meeting would have far-reaching consequences. Agdestein became really involved when the possibility arose of Magnus training with Kasparov. Henrik Carlsen called him to explain that the sessions with Kasparov would be costly and asked him if he wanted to consider helping them to find serious sponsorship. At the end of 2008, Magnus was 17 and ranked fourth in the world. Due to the deep crisis in the media industry at that point, Agdestein was not enjoying his work as much as he would like to. So the timing was good and having given it some thought he quit his job and began to work fulltime for Magnus Carlsen. At first he worked as his agent, trying to find sponsors and cre-

ating media contacts, but from 2011 onwards he became responsible for his management, taking over these tasks from his father Henrik.

In his first year Agdestein managed to find four sponsors who each contributed amounts in the region of 140,000 euro. Knowing Carlsen's popularity now, that sounds like an easy job, but actually it took a lot of time and energy. 'Even though Magnus was on his way to be Number 1, there is no big culture for sponsoring chess players. But I was quite sure we would succeed. Chess is such a big game, an intellectual sport, and in society today intellectual skills are all that matter. It used to be about being fast, now it's all about the mind. In this sense the best chess players represent extremely good values. Even with girls, young intellectual guys are much more popular these days. In fact, many companies have already used chess to symbolize their strategic thinking. So how come they haven't used any chess players? The reason is simple: because chess players are not well known to the mass public. So I had to work on the contacts with the media. Let them know whenever Magnus achieved something special or was involved in something interesting. I made a chart, how many times we wanted to appear in the Norwegian media, in chess media, in bigger magazines. For us to prioritize, for me to understand when we can say yes and when we can say no. He had a lot of appearances in the press. Now we have another problem. Now we have too many requests for interviews and have to say no to quite a lot. He doesn't need more exposure in Norway, we only want to maintain it. Now when we get exposure abroad I tell the Norwegian newspapers and television stations about it. That's what makes Magnus different from the other big sport stars in Norway. Chess is totally global and being number one in chess can give you a big article in *Der Spiegel* or *Time*, but being the best cyclist in the country will not give you that kind of exposure.

'We were kind of lucky, because this cooperation with Kasparov created huge interest. I organized dinners with Magnus and Kasparov, a couple of Norwegian ministers, potential sponsors.'

G-Star Raw

Another cooperation that made a big splash in the media was the one with G-Star, the Dutch fashion brand that hired Magnus Carlsen as a model in a campaign together with American movie star Liv Tyler. 'They approached us in the first place, but the match in New York, Magnus vs. the World, that we worked on together. They wanted Magnus to be more famous in New York before they presented him in the Fashion Week. They did everything to make that event as interesting as possible. Kasparov was there and it was a very good venue. But even then it can be hard for a sponsor to see what he gets in return for sponsoring a chess player. Because chess is not a TV sport and it is not well covered in the sports pages. With golf you will have your logo on TV and that has a lot of value. Companies have ways to calculate how much exposure they get and this is difficult with chess, so you have to be creative. We were asking for quite a decent amount and then you have to make sure that you can give something back. I started calling the media in Norway, always telling them when something was happening. And they were impressed.'

Starved for money

Not counting Kasparov, Magnus Carlsen is the only chess player with a manager at the moment. A peculiar situation for a sport that has a worldwide following. The absence of more managers puzzles Agdestein, although he can partly explain it. 'Only the top 30 players in the world can make a decent living out of chess. So there is too little money to attract good managers. Which is a pity, as managers will add something. They

will find sponsors for the players and then the sponsors will start to market the game and use chess in their communication.'

He agrees that the poor negotiating position most grandmasters are in has made it easy for organizations like FIDE to produce one-sided contracts that are not always in the interest of the players. 'Of course it's difficult for a chess player to go through a complicated contract. They are so eager to get into the cycle that they are ready to sign anything. Because the chess world is kind of starved for money and tournaments. If you get only one invitation per year, you don't have any negotiating position with FIDE, you have to accept anything they come up with. What I did for Magnus is that I made sure that all the contracts were fair. That they are balanced and not one-sided. Hopefully that is helpful for others as well. Because there are other players that are in a negotiating position, too. One of Magnus' sponsors is a very good law company, Simonson. They have helped him since he was 13. After helping Magnus for so many years they know a lot about the world of chess, so that is very helpful. Quite often when we have requests the organizers implement them in their contracts, so that it's also good for other players.'

Scandals

The first chess player with a visible manager was the already mentioned Garry Kasparov. The flamboyant Englishman Andrew Page left a clear stamp on the 13th world champion, by not only looking after his business interests but also teaching him how to dress well. Later, former tennis player Owen Williams became Kasparov's agent, a role the 81-year-old American still has. The other two managers that made a name in the chess world are Carsten Hensel from Germany, who used to work for Vladimir Kramnik and Peter Leko, and Silvio Danailov from Bulgaria, who gained notoriety for the conflicts he

was involved in as Veselin Topalov's manager.

Espen Agdestein met Owen Williams and spoke on the phone with him when they negotiated the contract between Kasparov and Carlsen. 'There were some things I was curious about and he gave me some advice. I think he must have been good for Garry as a manager, because Garry kept him for a long time.' About the others he has nothing to say, as he doesn't know how they have done their job. But he seems to refer to Danailov indirectly when he stresses the importance of a good image. 'For a business to be associated with Magnus, he should not be involved in any scandals. It's not good if people don't like him. In general it is very important to help a player to achieve a strong and positive brand, to create new and positive things. To work on projects, for instance a book project, that can be both good for business, but also develops the brand of the player. That's important, because one of the problems with chess players is that people don't know them. Why should you pay a lot for a chess player in an ad when nobody has heard about him? That doesn't make sense. You have to develop the brand of a player in a good and positive way for businesses to be interested in being associated with the player.'

Agdestein counts himself lucky that, unlike many players that have difficulty handling publicity, Carlsen in fact likes his public role. 'He adapts

naturally. Magnus reads a lot about sports. He knows how much a basketball player in the NBA earns, he knows a lot about how things are done in different sports and he knows that Tiger Woods, even after an awful round of golf, has to talk to the media, to do his job. I think he likes to be more and more professional.'

Emotions

Not surprisingly, Agdestein watched with considerable unease when he saw the press conferences at the recent world championship match in Moscow, where both Anand and Gelfand failed to hide their annoyance at many of the questions they were asked. But he doesn't solely want to put the blame on the players. 'The organizers should also have prepared questions themselves in advance, so as to cover the most important issues before the others start asking their questions. That would have been a good idea. It was very difficult for the players, but it would have been good if they had tried harder to give the press and the chess world more information about their emotions and feelings.'

Foreseeable and balanced

An important element of Carlsen's public persona are his appearances away from the chess board, which inevitably also invoke criticism if he has worse results. Agdestein understands the thoughts behind such criticism, but nevertheless rejects it. 'Very important is that all these activities should not harm his chess. He has to do all these corporate things, but this



NEW IN CHESS

'You have to develop the brand of a player in a good and positive way for businesses to be interested in being associated with him.'

should not keep him from training. That is a big priority for me. If you look at other sports, like tennis, they do all kinds of things for their sponsors or together with their sponsors. That is an important part of their job. But in the chess world there is this feeling that a chess player should not do anything but study chess 24 hours a day. I get a bit provoked when I hear things like that. Because I think that Magnus finds it meaningful to know that his job is a bit wider. He enjoys it and it widens his horizon. He makes more money and he still has plenty of time to do everything he wants to do. We regularly have meetings where we discuss and plan things and make schedules, so that everything is as foreseeable as possible and that everything is balanced. And of course I also talk a lot with Henrik, who knows him well.

Red Hot Chili Peppers

An essential part in the promotion of Magnus Carlsen is his Number 1 spot in the world rankings. Since he conquered the first place his lead

has mostly been commanding, but the thought of losing it may get on a manager's nerves. 'Of course that sometimes makes me nervous. But



New York 2010: Espen Agdestein and Magnus Carlsen photographed by Liv Tyler!

it's impossible to make everything dependent on him having the number one spot. That would be putting too much pressure on him too. We don't have anything like that in the contracts with the sponsors. When your brand is strong enough you no longer need to be Number 1. You may be Number 3 and chasing Number 1. Tiger Woods is now number ten in

the world and we still follow him. TV broadcasts of golf drop by 40 per cent if he is not playing.'

For the moment this is not his concern. Agdestein wants to explore new horizons and hopes that chess will be structured better, so that new initiatives can be developed. They want to improve Carlsen's presence in the new social media, on Twitter and Facebook, explore the opportunities that technical developments on smartphones offer. Of course there is tension too, but that's the great thing about sport. For the moment he enjoys the life he is leading to the full. The progress and the prospects of his client and the experiences he could not have dreamed of or expected. 'A lot of things actually. By myself I probably wouldn't have gone to the New York Fashion Week twice. Meeting Liv Tyler, stuff like that is cool. And in Rio, before the Sao Paulo Grand Slam, we were approached by the manager of the Red Hot Chili Peppers, who wanted to meet Magnus and play chess with him. Magnus sat with them for hours playing chess and they were enthusiastic, while there were thousands of girls screaming outside. So many things like that happening. It's exciting to open your mailbox every day.' ■

GARRY'S CHOICE
GARRY KASPAROV

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The luxurious Radisson hotel in the heart of Kazakhstan's capital Astana was the location of two world title events held in over just five days. Despite the absence of heavyweights Aronian, Kramnik, Anand and Nakamura, the 2012 Rapid and Blitz World Championships saw lots of excitement and two gripping races in which radically diverging scenarios eventually resulted in second



Peter Doggers

Sasha &

The Radisson Blu hotel complex in Astana is located on the northern bank of the Ishim River, along Sar'yarka Avenue. Besides the many cars passing by, you regularly see groups of amateur cyclists dressed in professional gear riding the avenue on fast bikes. On the way from the airport to the hotel you pass the beautiful Velodrome, a brand-new indoor hall for cycling and other sports.

Cycling is big in Astana, as witness the professional racing team bearing the same name that takes part in the Tour de France and other big races. 'The Astana team of a few years back is exemplary for how things are done in Kazakhstan,' said the country's



Astana's landmark Bayterek Tower.

strongest grandmaster Murtas Kazhgaleyev. 'They had Alberto Contador, Lance Armstrong, Levi Leipheimer and Andreas Klöden all together in

one team! When we do things, we want to do it the best way possible.'

Kazhgaleyev was referring to the exemplary organization of the 2012 Rapid and Blitz World Championships 2012. From the get-go – a slick (though somewhat chaotic) opening ceremony that included the presence of President Nursultan Nazarbaev – it was clear that money was not an issue. The main sponsors were two Kazakhstan public companies active in the metallurgy, mining, oil and gas sectors.

Located close to a small beach and boasting a spa health centre, pool, sauna and fitness facilities, the 5-star Radisson hotel was arguably the best



place in both events for top-seed Magnus Carlsen. In a relaxed but highly competitive atmosphere, two Russians emerged victorious. Before the eyes of a few dozen local chess fans and many thousands of online spectators, Sergey Karjakin became the first official Rapid World Champion, while Alexander Grischuk confirmed his love for speed chess by clinching his second World Blitz title.

R Seryozha up to speed

venue the players could have hoped for. During the tournament, former Destiny's Child singer Kelly Rowland stayed in the same hotel – she had come to perform at a local music festival.

The World Rapid and Blitz was only the third big chess event ever held in Kazakhstan. Four years ago, Lein-

ier Dominguez won the 2008 Blitz World Championship in Almaty. Back in 2001, Garry Kasparov won a six-player double round robin ahead of Vladimir Kramnik, Boris Gelfand, Alexey Shirov, Alexander Morozevich and Dargen Sadvakasov, then the rising star of Kazakh chess. These days, Dargen works for the Kazakh government and the chess federation, and

he was involved in the organization of the championships.

About a year ago, FIDE President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov had a meeting with the Kazakh President at which one of the topics was the organization of chess events in Kazakhstan. They decided then and there to hold the 2012 Rapid and Blitz World Championships in Astana. For these rela-

tively new championships FIDE skips official bidding procedures, as long as the host cities offer attractive financial conditions. In the same manner, next year's championships have already been given to Khanty-Mansiysk. Then, in March 2012, Ilyumzhinov returned to Kazakhstan to sign an agreement with the Kazakhstan Chess Federation that included a chess-in-schools project. It is likely that Ilyumzhinov had more business to do in Kazakhstan besides chess, but that's another story.

For the drawing of lots, a group of beautiful models entered the stage, dressed in either white or black and wearing masks. Just like eleven years ago, at the tournament won by Kasparov, the players had to 'pick a girl' to find out their lot number. The numbers were attached to the bottom of a little souvenir, a replica of the Bayterek building, the famous monument and observation tower in Astana's modern centre, built in 1997 when Astana became the capital of the country. (Trivia: that's why the Bayterek is 97 meters high!)

The only player who couldn't attend the opening ceremony was Sergey Karjakin. He travelled from Simferopol, where he had spent some time with his family, but the Simferopol-Moscow flight was delayed for three hours – exactly the time he needed to catch his connecting flight to Astana! Karjakin arrived exactly 24 hours later, at 7 a.m. of the first playing day. Getting a few hours of sleep before the first game, which started at 3 p.m., he skipped the technical meeting. As a result he would only find out at the end of the first day about the Corsica/Sofia rule which was in effect! But all this didn't exactly have a negative influence on his play...

At times it was a bit hot inside the playing hall, but for the rest the playing

conditions were excellent. The boards, tables and chairs were aligned in two rows and roped off, so that the spectators – about 50 each day – could come to about 1.5 meters from the boards and follow the action without bothering the participants. While doing so, they could listen to the online commentary provided by GMs Sergey Shipov (Russian) and Robert Fontaine (English) using an audio set. The



games were shown on two big LED screens on each side of the playing area with four diagrams each. Unfortunately, these screens showed the games in horrible pixel quality. Apparently, they were not entirely compatible with the software, a problem which was only partly solved on the very last day.

The Rapid World Championship was a single round robin of 15 rounds held over three days, with five rounds played each day. The time-control was 15 minutes plus 10-second increments. The Blitz World Championship was a double round robin of 30 rounds held over two days, with 15 rounds played on each day. The time-control was 3 minutes plus 2-second increments.

Magnus Carlsen, Teimour Radjabov, Sergey Karjakin, Alexander Morozevich, Vasily Ivanchuk, Alexander Grischuk, Veselin Topalov, Peter Svidler, Boris Gelfand, Victor Bologan and Shakhriyar Mamedyarov

took part in both tournaments. For each event the organizers could enter two wild cards, and three more spots could be earned at a qualifier previous to the main event. For the rapid championship, Alexey Dreev, Igor Kurnosov and Vladislav Tkachiev qualified, while Murtas Kazhgaleyev and Anuar Ismagambetov got the wild cards. For the blitz, Dmitry Andreikin, Le Quang Liem and Nikolay Chadaev qualified, and Pavel Kotsur and Rinat Jumabayev were the wild cards.

Obviously, some big names were missing in Astana, most notably Levon Aronian, Vladimir Kramnik, Vishy Anand and Hikaru Nakamura. The main reason for their absence was the fact that they only received their invitations in the first week of June. According to Sadvakasov, despite having outlined concrete plans already months before, the federation only got the green light to hold the event about a month before the start.

The eleven top GMs who did play had been selected by FIDE based on the January 1, 2012 rating list. This was a controversial decision. As Ruslan Ponomarev argued in his blog at ChessVibes.com, there had been a qualifier for the World Blitz right after the Aeroflot Open in Moscow in February 2011. There, Ponomarev and five other GMs qualified for the World Blitz, which was supposed to take place right after the Tal Memorial in November 2011, until the Russian Chess Federation cancelled the blitz part. Ponomarev felt that he had qualified for Astana, and according to Aeroflot organizer Alexander Bakh, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov himself had made a promise that these six players would play in the next World Blitz. However, in Astana Geoffrey Borg of FIDE said that he didn't know about this agreement.

It was no coincidence that the start of the tournament, on July 6th, coincided with a national holiday in Kazakhstan: the Day of the Capital, which is also the birthday of the President. Despite his logistical problems Sergey Karjakin started with four consecutive wins, one of his victims being his compatriot Alexander Grischuk.

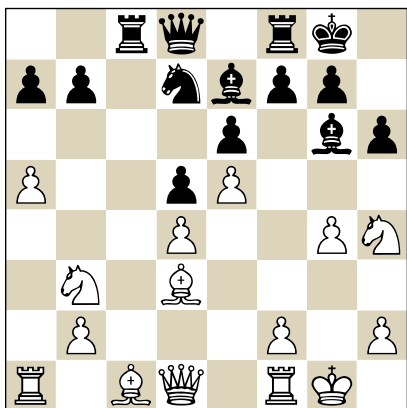
CK 4.9 – B12

Sergey Karjakin

Alexander Grischuk

Astana 2012 (4)

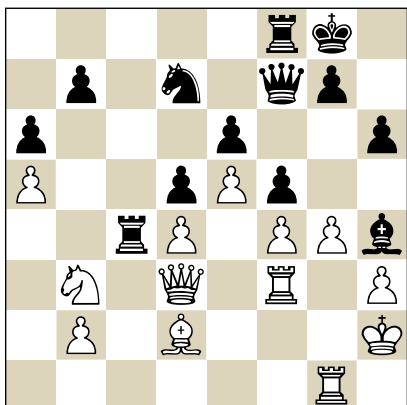
1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.e5 ♘f5 4.♘f3 e6 5.♙e2 ♘e7 6.0-0 h6 7.♘bd2 ♘d7 8.♘b3 ♙g6 9.a4 ♘f5 10.a5 ♖c8 11.c4 ♙e7 12.cxd5 cxd5 13.♙d3 0-0 14.g4 ♘h4 15.♘xh4



15...♙xd3

Four days later the same position was reached between the same players in Round 21 of the blitz tournament. There, Grischuk deviated with 15...♙xh4 16. ♙xg6 fxg6 17. ♖d3 g5, and the game ended in a draw after 44 moves.

16.♖xd3 ♙xh4 17.♙d2 f5 18.h3 ♖e7 19.f4 a6 20.♙h2 ♖f7 21.♖f3 ♖c4 22.♖g1



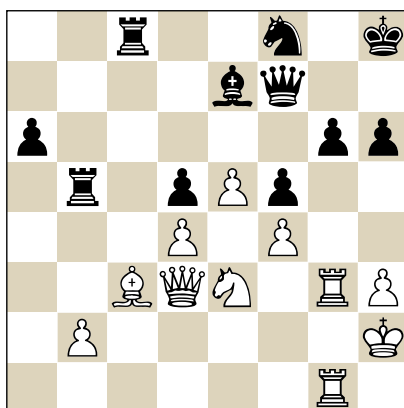
White can easily build up the pressure on the kingside, as Black has no counterplay.

22...♖fc8 23.♙c3 ♙h8 24.♘d2 ♖4c6 25.♘f1 g6 26.♘e3 ♘f8 27.♘g2 ♙e7 28.♖g3 b5

‘Despite his logistical problems Sergey Karjakin started with four consecutive wins.’

Desperately trying to find some play on the other side of the board.

29.axb6 ♖xb6 30.gxf5 exf5 31.♘e3 ♖b5

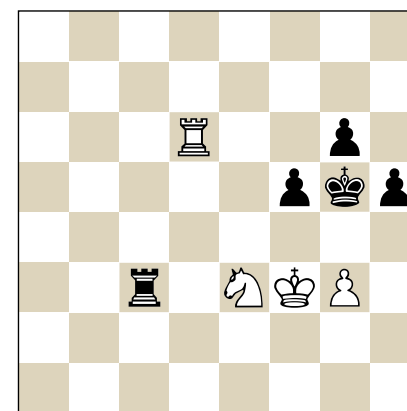


Now Karjakin finishes the game nicely with

32.♘xf5! gxf5 33.♖xf5!
Black resigned.

Following a draw with Veselin Topalov in Round 5, Karjakin allowed Magnus Carlsen to draw level at the top at the end of the first day.

Carlsen drew his game against Svidler. The last bit went like this:

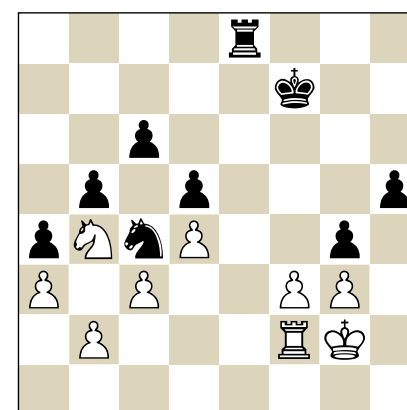


Svidler-Carlsen
position after 52.♖d6

52...♖a3 53.♖b6 ♖d3 54.♖a6 ♖b3 55.♖c6 ♖a3 56.♖b6 ♖c3 57.♖a6 ♖b3 Draw.

The players dutifully repeated their moves before asking the arbiter permission to draw the game, because the Corsica/Sofia rule was in effect. This rule was a novelty for a ‘fast chess’ event, and nobody was really sure about its purpose. (‘I think it’s a bit ridiculous’, said Peter Svidler), but over the course of the five days everyone was paying less and less attention to it, and on the final day the players simply offered draws in drawn positions themselves, and not a single time did an arbiter object. Needless to say, there were almost no short draws (except for Mamedyarov and Radjabov, who drew all their games against each other quickly).

Carlsen reached 4½/5 thanks to a devilish trick against Igor Kurnosov. It wasn’t correct, but good enough in the fast lane!

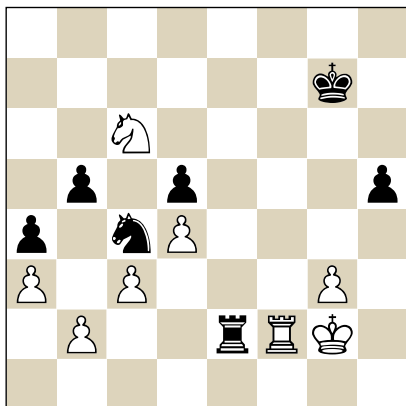


Kurnosov-Carlsen
position after 54.♖f2

54...gxf3+!?

This involves the loss of a pawn, but Carlsen has looked deeper.

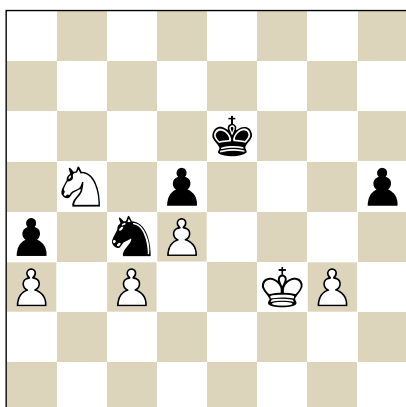
55. ♖xf3+ ♔g7 56. ♗xc6 ♕e2+ 57. ♖f2



57... ♖xb2?!

Still following the intended path, but better was 57... ♖xf2+ 58. ♔xf2 ♗xb2 because of 59. ♗a7 ♗d1+ 60. ♔e2 ♗xc3+ 61. ♔d3 ♗e4, and White is on the ropes.

58. ♖xb2 ♗xb2 59. ♗a7 ♔f6 60. ♗xb5 ♔e6 61. ♔f3 ♗c4



62. ♔e2? Now the trick works. White could still save himself with 62. ♗c7+ ♔d6 63. ♗a6.

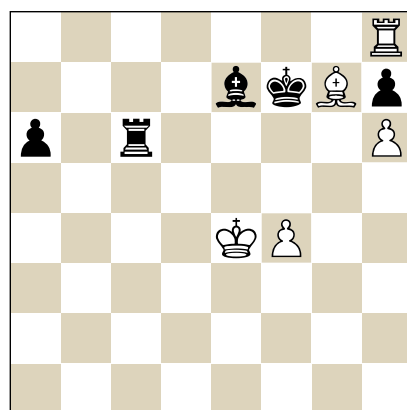
62... ♔d7 63. ♔d3 ♔c6 64. ♗a7+ ♔b7 And the knight is trapped. White resigned.

Carlsen finished the second playing day with a firm lead. The Norwegian was 1½ points ahead of Karjakin and Topalov. The Bulgarian was even surprised himself about his good form after his disappointing loss against Vallejo in a rapid match in Leon a few weeks earlier.

In the 10th round Carlsen beat Karjakin, who blundered in an ending with just three seconds on the clock.

Astana 2012 Rapid

			TPR
1	Sergey Karjakin	RUS 2779	11½ 2922
2	Magnus Carlsen	NOR 2837	10½ 2856
3	Veselin Topalov	BUL 2752	9½ 2808
4	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE 2726	9½ 2810
5	Alexander Grischuk	RUS 2763	9 2784
6	Boris Gelfand	ISR 2738	8 2735
7	Peter Svidler	RUS 2749	7½ 2713
8	Vasily Ivanchuk	UKR 2769	7½ 2712
9	Teimour Radjabov	AZE 2788	7½ 2711
10	Alexey Dreev	RUS 2677	7 2697
11	Alexander Morozevich	RUS 2770	6½ 2662
12	Igor Kurnosov	RUS 2663	6 2647
13	Murtas Kazhgaleyev	KAZ 2589	6 2652
14	Victor Bologan	MDA 2732	6 2642
15	Vladislav Tkachiev	FRA 2644	4½ 2571
16	Anuar Ismagambetov	KAZ 2471	3½ 2521



Carlsen-Karjakin
position after 53. ♖h8

53... ♖c4+? Instead, 53... ♗f6! 54. ♗xf6 (or 54. ♖xh7 ♔g6) 54... ♔xf6 55. ♖xh7 ♔g6 56. ♖h8 is a draw even without Black's a-pawn.

54. ♗f5 ♖c5+ 55. ♗e5 ♗f8 56. ♖xh7+ ♔g8 57. ♖h8+ ♔f7 58. ♖xf8+ Black resigned.

On the third and final day of the rapid event, Alexander Grischuk was wearing a T-shirt with the text 'Show illusion, curious incidents'. This turned out to be an apt way of summarizing what was about to happen, with Vasily Ivanchuk playing a key part.

It started with the encounter Karjakin-Ivanchuk in Round 11. The Ukrainian number one played well, reaching a better endgame in which he basically had zero chance of losing. However, despite the 10-second incre-

ment, Ivanchuk at some point forgot about his clock and lost on time while trying to find a winning plan.

Still furious with himself, and probably full of adrenaline, Ivanchuk then inflicted the very first loss upon Carlsen the next round. The tournament was suddenly completely open again...

The world's Number 1 then also lost his game against Grischuk, while Karjakin defeated Radjabov and Kazhgaleyev. After resigning his game, Carlsen remained sitting in his chair for a few seconds, realizing that his big lead had evaporated like melting snow.

The arbiter who sat next to Carlsen's board during both games, Ashot Vardapetian of Armenia made sure he wasn't administering Carlsen's board for a third consecutive time in the next round!

With two rounds to go, Karjakin was half a point ahead of Carlsen and duly won yet another game, against Peter Svidler. Carlsen couldn't get through Radjabov's defences, but even trailing by a point, the Norwegian could still win the tournament: if two players were to tie for first, an Armageddon game would decide the outcome. However, Karjakin drew his last game against Kurnosov, finishing clear first, with a superb score of 11½/15. After escaping with a draw against Topalov in the final round, Carlsen ended on 10½ points, while Mamedyarov and Topalov finished on 9½ points.

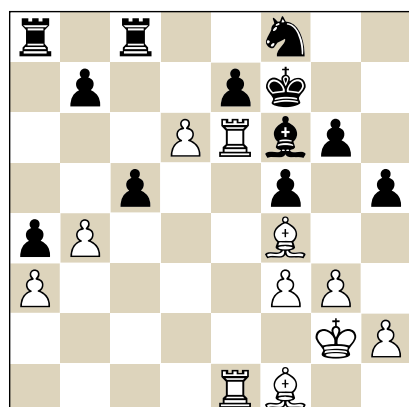
Bring on the blitz

One day later, again at 3 p.m., play resumed with the first 15 rounds of blitz. It was clear that, being the top seed, Carlsen was determined to win this event, but again he seemed to be lacking energy, getting off to a modest start of only 2½/6.

Sergey Karjakin, who had been dubbed the 'Steinitz of rapid chess' the day before, started strongly again and was leading after nine rounds with seven points. However, he then fell

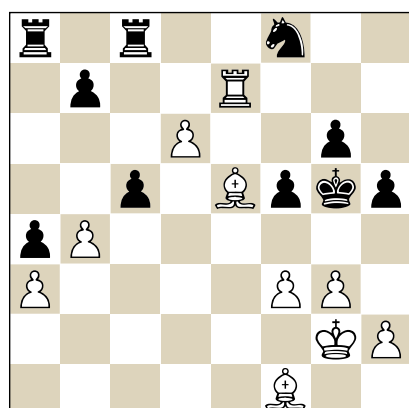
back, scoring only 2½ points in the last six rounds. At the end of the first day it was Alexander Grischuk, the winner of the 2006 Blitz World Championship in Rishon-le-Zion, Israel, who was leading the pack. Three players were trailing by a point: Karjakin, Ivanchuk (who won the World Blitz in 2007) and Dmitry Andreikin, who couldn't be considered an outsider either. The 22-year-old Russian GM is a legend of Internet blitz, and in Astana he won games against three former blitz champs: Carlsen, Ivanchuk and Grischuk.

Andreikin's win against Le Quang Liem was pretty:



Andreikin-Le Quang
position after 40...dxf8

41.♖xe7+! ♜xe7 42.♖xe7+ ♔f6
After 42...♔g8 43.♙c4+ leads to mate.
43.♙e5+ ♔g5



44.h4+ The 'silent' 44.♙g7 leads to mate even more quickly.
44...♔h6 45.♙g7+ ♔h7 46.♙f6+
Black resigned.

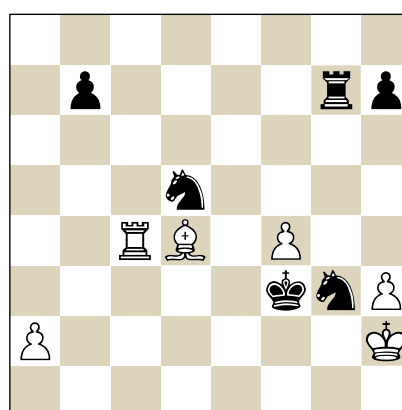
Ivanchuk's role in the blitz was practically the opposite from his contribution to the rapid. Against Carlsen he



Dmitry Andreikin, 'a legend of Internet blitz', won games against three former blitz champs: Carlsen, Ivanchuk and Grischuk.

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lost a winning position after a huge blunder:

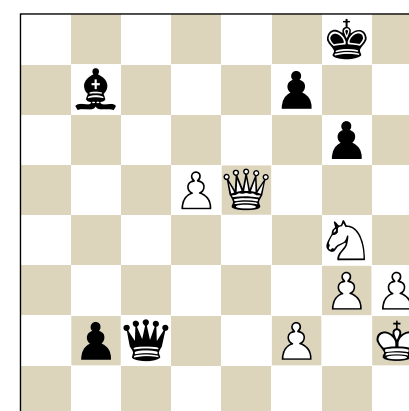


Carlsen-Ivanchuk
position after 52.♔h2

Ivanchuk had refuted an incorrect piece sacrifice by his opponent, and was about to finish the technical phase.

52...♞e4??
52...♞f1+ is in fact mate in six.
53.♙xg7
Black resigned.

And then against Karjakin he took revenge for his rapid loss, in a game that really fitted the premonition of Grischuk's 'curious incidents' shirt.



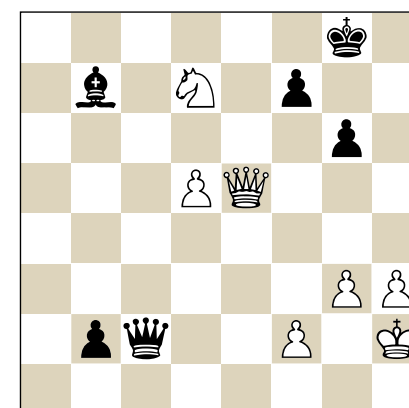
Ivanchuk-Karjakin
position after 49...b2

50.♞f6+? 50.d6! is the typical winning move immediately spotted by an engine but not by a human in time-trouble. It's not that White has time to get a second queen (which stops a human from looking at it); no, the pawn takes away the e7-square from the black king in one of the lines: 50...b1 ♔ 51.♞f6+ ♔g7 52.♞e8+ and here 52...♔f8 fails to 53.♔h8 mate.

50...♔f8? 50...♔g7! draws here: 51.♞d7+ and White has to give perpetual check. (But not 51.♞e8+? ♔f8, and Black wins!)

51.♞h7+ ♔g8 52.♞f6+ ♔f8 53.♞h7+ ♔g8 54.♞f6+ ♔f8 Assuming that his opponent is about to offer a draw, Karjakin repeats moves without thinking. It's not clear whether he could already have claimed a draw here, because in the blitz tournament the arbiters weren't writing down the complete games, only some endgames in which the 50-move rule was relevant. However, Karjakin might have taken a peek at the digital screen that showed the game in the playing hall!

55.♞d7+ ♔g8



56.♔e8+!

Astana 2012 Blitz

1	Alexander Grischuk	RUS	2763	20
2	Magnus Carlsen	NOR	2837	19½
3	Sergey Karjakin	RUS	2779	18½
4	Alexander Morozevich	RUS	2770	17½
5	Dmitry Andreikin	RUS	2700	17
6	Teimour Radjabov	AZE	2788	17
7	Le Quang Liem	VIE	2693	16½
8	Peter Svidler	RUS	2749	15
9	Vasily Ivanchuk	UKR	2769	15
10	Boris Gelfand	ISR	2738	13½
11	Nikolai Chadaev	RUS	2580	13½
12	Shakhriyar Mamedyarov	AZE	2726	13
13	Veselin Topalov	BUL	2752	13
14	Rinat Jumabayev	KAZ	2561	12
15	Viktor Bologan	MDA	2732	11
16	Pavel Kotsur	KAZ	2571	8
16 players, 30 rounds				

Finally Ivanchuk, who has collected a few more seconds thanks to the increments, sees the mate.

56...♔h7 57.♚xf7+ ♔h6 58.♚f8+ ♔g5 59.♚f4+
Black resigned.

On the final blitz day, Grischuk added 9½ points, to reach a total of 20 points from 30 games. For Carlsen the tournament was a few rounds too short. The Norwegian finished with 8(!) wins in a row, but fell short by half a point to catch Grischuk. Karjakin finished third, one point behind Carlsen.

During his winning streak, Carlsen seemed truly invincible. He even started one game, against Teimour Radjabov, with 1.a4 and won convincingly! This, however, was an inside joke. At the previous World Blitz, in November 2010 in Moscow, Radjabov had said to Carlsen at some point: 'Everyone is so tired now, you might as well start with 1.a4 and still win.' A quip that Carlsen had not forgotten.

Grischuk was both surprised and not surprised that he won his second blitz world title in Astana. He was surprised, because he fell ill after the first day of rapid chess and suffered from a flu for the next four days. Afterwards the Muscovite was grateful to Boris Gelfand, who had given him pills which had worked wonders! But

at the same time, Grischuk wasn't surprised. 'I think it's normal when a person achieves the best in what he likes the best', he said. 'For example, Kramnik likes classical chess best and he achieved the best in classical. For me it's blitz.'

It is well known that Grischuk prefers blitz over classical chess. Already in 2001, in an interview in New In Chess when he was 17, he said: 'For 99 per cent of humanity nothing will be lost, because they don't understand the depth of the game anyway. For them it is much more interesting to see the players move quickly and to see the expressions on their faces when they get nervous.'

In Astana, Sergey Karjakin and Alexander Grischuk had the strongest nerves: both of them won one of

Grischuk wasn't surprised. 'I think it's normal when a person achieves the best in what he likes the best.'

the two \$40,000 first prizes. After the tournament, these two friends ('Sasha' and 'Seryozha' to friends) revealed that as part of their preparation they had in fact played an online blitz match on ICC.

At the final press conference, Carlsen said: 'It's funny for me in a way. In the rapid tournament I had a huge lead, while in the blitz tournament I was way behind all the time, and both times it was just enough for second place. My only regret is that the tournament is over, because especially at the end it was great fun.' With that last sentence, he was expressing the general feeling of most participants.

Games selection

FR 4.4 – C11

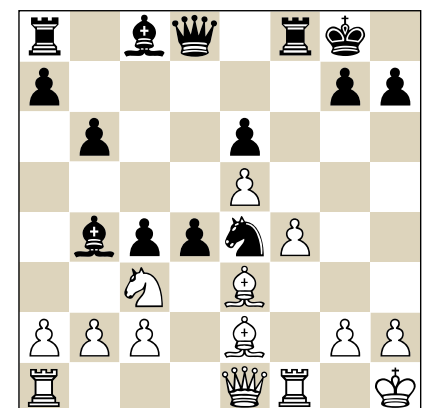
Magnus Carlsen

Alexander Morozevich

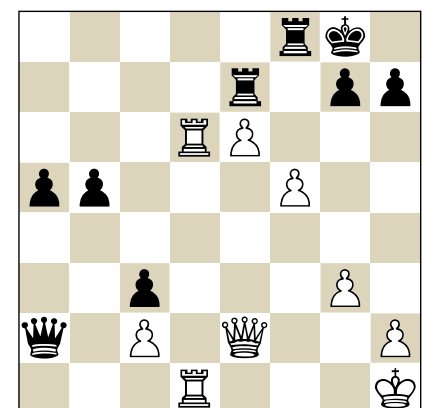
Astana 2012 Rapid (2)

Carlsen was happy with this game. 'Morozevich is a strong player and I beat him quite easily.'

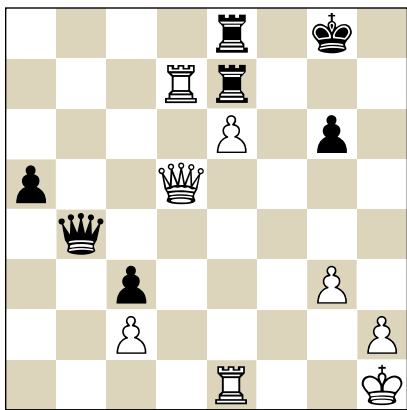
1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘c3 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7 5.f4 c5 6.♘f3 ♘c6 7.♙e3 ♙e7 8.♚d2 b6 9.♙d3 0-0 10.0-0 f6 11.exf6 ♘xf6 12.♙h1 c4 13.♙e2 ♙b4 14.♘e5 ♘xe5 15.dxe5 ♘e4 16.♚e1 d4?! This is just good for White because of the next move.



17.♖d1 ♘xc3 18.bxc3 ♙xc3 19.♚f2 b5 20.♙xd4 ♙xd4 21.♖xd4 ♚a5 22.♙f3 ♖b8 23.♖fd1 23.♚h4! was also strong. 23...♙b7 24.♖d7 ♙xf3 25.♚xf3 ♖bd8 26.♖7d6 ♖de8 27.♚g4 ♖e7 28.♖xe6 ♖ef7 29.g3 ♚xa2 30.♚e2 a5 31.♖ed6 c3 32.e6 ♖e7 33.f5!



33...♚a3 The pawn cannot be taken: 33...♖xf5? 34.♖d8+ ♖f8 35.♖xf8+ ♙xf8 36.♚f3+ and mate.
34.♚xb5 ♚b4 35.♚d5 g6 36.fxg6 hxg6 37.♖d7 ♖fe8 38.♖e1



38...a4?! More resilient was 38...♖b6 39.♔g2 ♜f8.

39.♔g2! Excellent prophylaxis, preventing a check on b1.

39...♖b6 40.♜e4! The last piece joins the attack. **40...♜xe6 41.♜g4 ♔h8 42.♜h4+ ♔g8 43.♜h6 g5 44.♖xg5+** Black resigned.

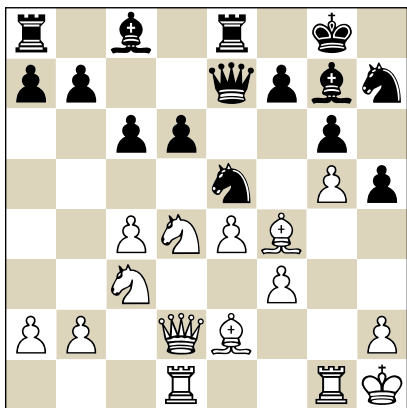
KI 15.3 – E94

Veselin Topalov

Teimour Radjabov

Astana 2012 Rapid (7)

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 g6 3.♘c3 ♙g7 4.e4 d6 5.♘f3 0-0 6.♙e2 e5 7.0-0 exd4 8.♘xd4 ♜e8 9.f3 c6 10.♔h1 ♘h5 11.g4 ♘f6 12.♙f4 h5 13.g5 ♘h7 14.♖d2 ♖e7 15.♜ad1 ♘d7 16.♜g1 ♘e5



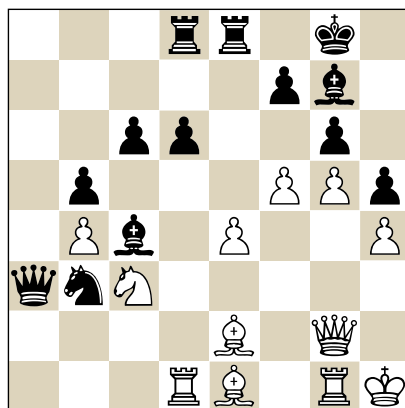
17.♘c2 A new try. 17.♖e1 ♘f8 18.♖f2 a6 19.♘b3 ♙e6 20.c5 ♜ad8 21.cxd6 ♜xd6 22.♖c5 ♜xd1 23.♜xd1 ♘fd7 24.♖xe7 ♜xe7 was played at the last Amber tournament, Monaco 2011, between Gelfand and Grischuk. **17...♙e6 18.♘e3 ♜ad8 19.♖e1 a6 20.♖g3 ♙c8 21.h4 b5 22.cxb5 axb5 23.a3 ♘f8 24.♖h2 ♘e6 25.♙g3 ♘c5 26.♖g2 ♙e6 27.b4 ♘b3 28.♙e1 ♖a7 29.♘c2**



PETER DOGGERS

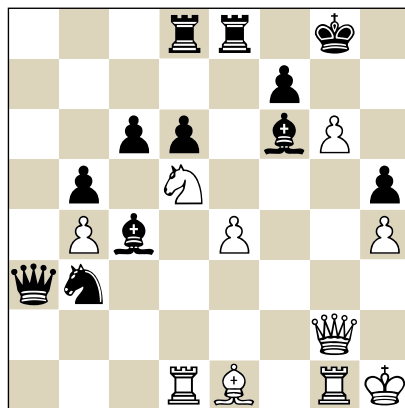
Inwardly happy with his second World Blitz title and the \$40,000 first prize that came with it, Alexander Grischuk lifts the winner's trophy.

♘c4 30.f4 ♘xa3 31.♘xa3 ♖xa3 32.f5 ♙c4 Because things haven't exactly gone according to plan on the queenside, Topalov now speeds up his attack on the kingside with a piece sac.



33.♙xh5!? gxh5 34.f6 ♙h8 35.g6 ♙xf6 36.♘d5!?

The engines actually prefer 36.♖f3, with excellent prospects for White.



36...♙xd5? Black should have played 36...cxd5!, and now 37.gxf7+ ♔xf7 38.♖g6+ ♔e7, and White should take the draw with 39.♖h7+ ♔e6 40.♖f5+. **37.exd5 ♖b2 37... ♜f8** loses to 38.gxf7+ ♔xf7 39.♖g6+ ♔e7, and now 40.♙c3!. **38.gxf7+ ♔f8 38...♔xf7 39.♖g6+ ♔e7 40.♖h7+ and 38...♔h8 39.♖g6** quickly lead to mate. **39.♖g8+ ♔e7 40.f8♖+!** Black resigned.

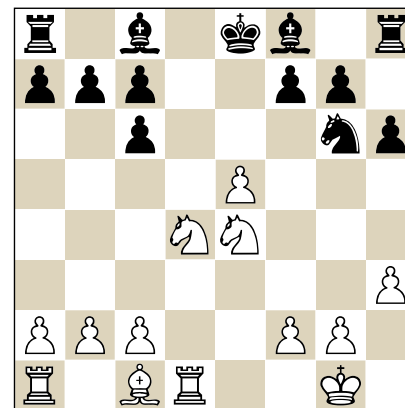
RL 7.4 – C67

Alexander Grischuk

Magnus Carlsen

Astana Rapid 2012 (13)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♘f6 4.0-0 ♘xe4 5.d4 ♘d6 6.♙xc6 dxc6 7.dxe5 ♘f5 8.♖xd8+ ♔xd8 9.♘c3 h6 10.♜d1+ ♔e8 11.h3 ♘e7 12.♘e4 ♘g6 13.♘d4!?



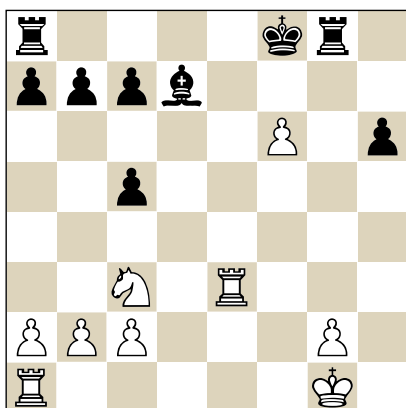
A new move. 13.♖e1 c5 14.♘g3 ♗e6 15.♘h5 ♖d7 16.a4 ♜e8 17.♗d2 ♗d5 was Kosteniuk-Stefanova, Beijing 2008.

13...♘xe5 Black has to take the pawn, because otherwise 14.f4 just gives White an advantage.

14.♗f4 ♗d6 15.♞e1 f6 16.♗xe5 ♗xe5 After 16...fxe5 White can take on d6 and play f4, but 17.♘f3!? is also interesting.

17.♘xf6+ gxf6 18.f4 c5 19.♘b5 ♗d7 20.♘c3 ♞g8 21.fxe5 ♗xh3 22.exf6+ ♖f8 23.♞e2 ♗g4 24.♞e3 ♗d7?!

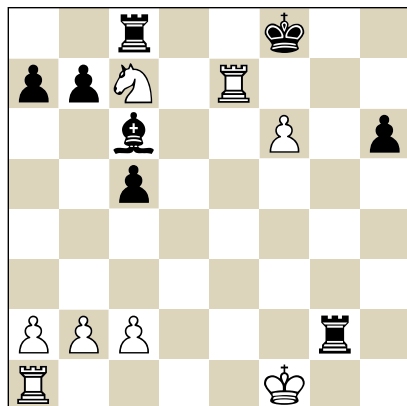
24...♞g6 25.♞f1 ♞d8 is about equal.



25.♘d5! ♗c6

Again 25...♞g6 offered better drawing chances, because after 26.♞e7 ♗c6 27.♘xc7 Black has 27...♞xf6!.

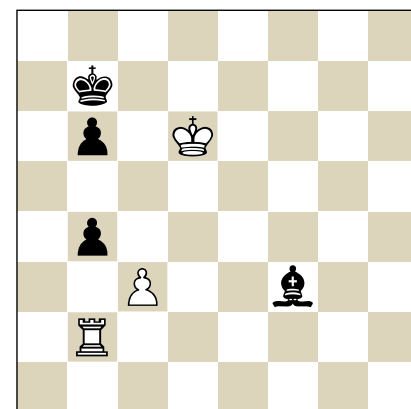
26.♘xc7! ♞xg2+ 27.♖f1 ♞c8 28.♞e7



Threatening 29.♘e6+ and 30.f7+, so Black has no other choice than to give an exchange.

28...♞xc7 29.♞xc7 ♞g6 30.f7 ♞f6+ 31.♖e2 ♞xf7 32.♞xf7+ ♖xf7 33.♞f1+ ♖e6 34.♖e3 h5 35.♞f8 ♗d5 36.a3 ♖e5 37.♞e8+

♗d6 38.♞h8 a5 39.♞h6+ ♖c7 40.♞xh5 ♖d6 41.♞h6+ ♖c7 42.♖f4 b6 43.♖e5 ♗g2 44.♞h7+ ♖b8 45.♞g7 ♗f3 46.♗d6 ♗e4 47.c3 ♗h1 48.♞e7 ♗g2 49.b3 ♗h1 50.♞e2 ♖b7 51.♞b2 ♗f3 52.b4 cxb4 53.axb4 axb4

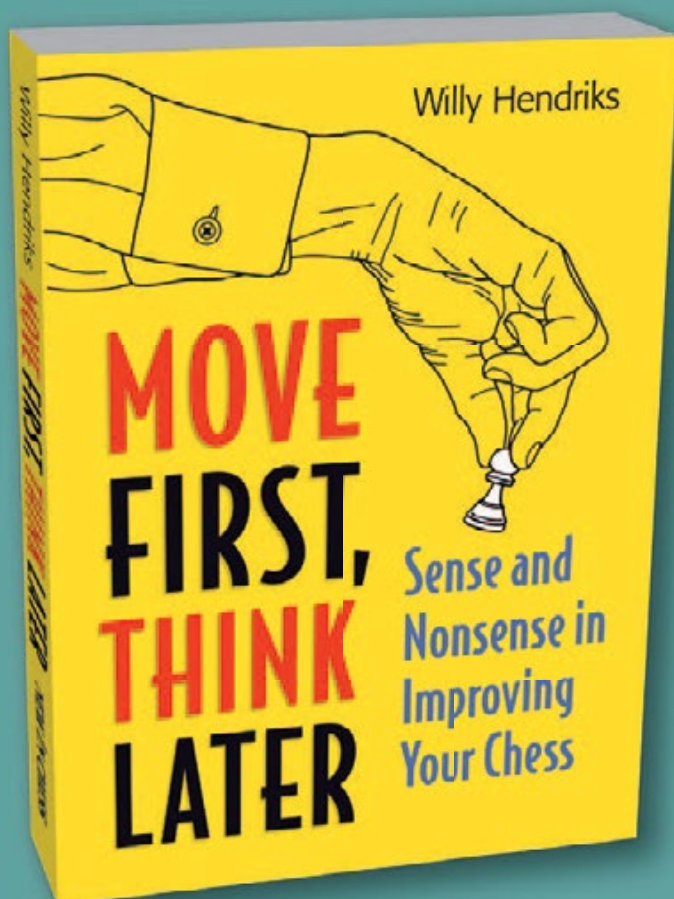


54.♞xb4

Grischuk knows what he's doing. 54.cxb4?? would be a theoretical draw.

54...♗e2 55.c4 ♖a6 56.♖c6 ♖a5 57.♞b5+ ♖a4 58.♖d5

Black resigned. ■



"What a fantastic book! I have not enjoyed reading an instructional book so much in recent years. I was laughing out loud throughout, because it is very witty, but it is also a really important instructional volume that everyone connected with chess improvement should read."

Steve Giddins, author of '50 Ways to Win at Chess'

"It is refreshing that he shows (..) that in many cases [finding a move] is merely about intuition and calculation, and that quite a few trainers, commentators and chess journalists are just windbags."

Johan Hut, Gooi en Eemlander

"I can't really express just how much I enjoyed the new book 'Move First Think Later' by Willy Hendriks."

Mark Crowther, TWIC

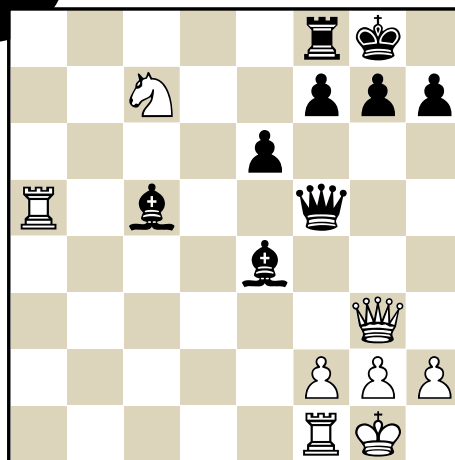
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Bab Wilders, Nederlands Dagblad

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The 33-year dominance of chess by players whose surnames begin with 'K' is unique in sports history. Lest you quip 'All Russian names start with K!', consider the first six Soviet-born World Champs (A, B, S, T, P, S). The 'K era' really starts in 1974, when Karpov beat Kortchnoi in the Candidates' final preceding Fischer's implosion. Anatoly humbled Viktor twice more ('78 & '81), followed by 5 consecutive Karpov-Kasparov matches (1984-1990). With the tragicomic split of FIDE and the PCA (1993-2006), the hegemony of K's diminished just slightly. GM Short became the first 'non-K' challenger in 19 years, when he fell to Kasparov in '93. GK then won everything in sight while his PCA strove to supplant FIDE's absurd politics. After Kasparov beat Anand in the last PCA WC (1995), the ersatz, irregular FIDE WC was the only game in town. Even these events produced a 'K-K' match (Karpov-Kamsky 1996) and two surprise 'K' FIDE knockout tourney champs (Khalifman & Kasimdzhanov). Kramnik shockingly dethroned Kasparov in 2000 and reigned for 8 years until Anand finally struck a blow for the rest of the alphabet in 2008.

Solutions on page 63



NEW ♖ IN CHESS 59



Dawn of a New Century

I

n cricket, a batsman traditionally raises his bat to the pavilion, in acknowledgment of applause, upon hitting a century. In late May, I felt a similar sense of elation, although minus the clapping, upon visiting my 100th country – Peru. For someone who didn't travel abroad once during his first decade, it is not a bad little achievement. At least this is one 'competition' where I am still ahead of my old rival Garry Kasparov ☺.

The occasion for my latest South American trip was a rapid match against Julio Granda. Prior to that, I gave a simul at the imposing and venerable Club Nacional, founded in 1855, at Plaza San Martin, in the centre of historic Lima. A suit and tie were prerequisites to gain admission to this gentlemen's club for the country's political and business elite, and bastion of power and respectability. However, once past the courteous, but strictly formal, liveried footmen, the atmosphere was most welcoming. Thankfully, the chess was not unduly taxing and I conceded just a single draw from 17 or 18 boards, before enjoying a most convivial dinner with fine wines with my vanquished adversaries.

The match with Julio began inaus-

piciously. I was perturbed to discover the venue was not the comfortable hall at the modern Universidad Científica del Sur where we had conducted the press conference a couple of days earlier, but a tent on campus grounds. I had not anticipated such an unexpected turn and, it being late autumn, I had to hurriedly send for a sweater. Worse, the board was illuminated by a solitary light, at several metres distance, which cast long shadows. Luckily the weather held, otherwise we would have had the pounding of rain on the canvass roof to add to our distractions. If the players had it bad, the dozens of spectators who had ventured to the city outskirts were even more neglected: basically they couldn't see a thing. None of this excuses my exceedingly poor play on the first day, being fortunate only to go 1-2 down (I have become very sluggish out of the blocks in recent years), but certainly the conditions didn't help either.

The highly articulate, pleasant and competent driving force behind my trip, Adrian Noriega, apologized profusely for the state of affairs, saying that unfortunately he had not been directly responsible for arrangements on site. He dashed over to meet the university authorities that evening. Next day everything was in order, with scores kept, abundant lighting and cameras all correctly positioned. Miraculously I even overcame my dismal start, winning with white in the fourth and sixth games to clinch the match 3½-2½. In a bizarre adden-

dum, at the behest of the sponsor, we also played a blitz game with backward-moving pawns. It was won by Julio. One suspects this curious innovation is likely to prove ephemeral.

Incidentally, Adrian Noriega was victim of the most notorious heist of the 2010 Khanty-Mansiysk FIDE General Assembly. As the newly-elected Peruvian Delegate, with the documentation from the sports' ministry to prove it, he had to endure an extraordinary speech by Kirsan Ilyumzhinov in which, without a scintilla of evidence, the Kalmykian space-traveller claimed the previous incumbent (and safe Kirsan vote) was, in fact, the legitimate Delegate. Outrageously, the matter was put to a general vote (which is why it is essential to have independent observers to ensure free and fair elections) and Adrian was duly ousted. Had the election been any closer, it is unquestionable that this blatant example of electoral highway-robbery would have gone to court.

My last official engagement in Peru was in many ways the most interesting. A school simul, in a rough part of town, may not sound the least bit noteworthy, but the kids of 'Saco Oliveros' – where chess is part of the curriculum – were exceptionally strong. I had already witnessed the World under-13 Champion Jose Martinez trounce Julio Granda in an informal one-on-one game a few days previously, so I was particularly wary. I survived against him, from a position of inferiority, and conceded four



Nigel Short came to give a lecture and a simul (which he did), but the English guitarist also treated the visitors of the Annex Chess Club to a duet ('Under the Boardwalk' and 'A Hard Day's Night') with club founder Ted Winick on trombone.

other draws – including one against a cousin of the famous Cori siblings. I was more than happy with my play and final result (+23 =5). Almost all the new generation of talented Peruvian kids are from the same group of 28 schools where chess is taught. The majority are from modest family backgrounds – which simply goes to prove that the talent is all there, if only it is allowed to flourish.

I snatched a few days at the end to stay at the marvellous UNESCO World Heritage Site of Cusco, high in the Andean mountains – feasting upon alpaca and guinea-pig (to the utter disgust of at least one American tourist) in Spanish colonial splendour. From there I took the Orient Express (which was neither 'oriental' nor 'express') through spectacular landscape to the famous Inca city of Machu Picchu – which really is as good as it is hyped. It was a fitting end to a most memorable trip.

June brought me back to the Americas, this time north to the 7th Edmonton International, in Canada. If truth be told, it was not the strongest round-robin in which I have ever participated – being designed primarily to provide norms for the local

Albertan players. Still, I got paid, which is not something that can be taken for granted these days, so all was fine.

On the way there, I stopped off first at the vibrant Annex Chess Club, in downtown Toronto, where I had been made a very welcome guest the previous year. Those attending the lecture, which preceded the simul, were a little surprised to see me striding out onto the stage, guitar in hand, to perform a brief duet ('Under the Boardwalk' and 'A Hard Day's Night') with club founder Ted Winick on trombone. Whether this aural assault had any influence on the evening's play,

‘At least
this is one
“competition”
where I am still
ahead of my
old rival
Garry
Kasparov 😊.’

I know not: nevertheless, the fact remains I won all my games.

Ted, incidentally, was one of the primary movers behind the Toronto Chess Olympiad bid for 2016. Unfortunately this ambitious project eventually collapsed, but I have no doubt that with his tremendous energy and personal integrity he will succeed with other perhaps slightly less grandiose schemes.

From Toronto, I flew to the capital, Ottawa, where I stayed with my good friend Gordon Ritchie and his wife Marg. Gordon is more or less retired these days, but as a government minister he was one of the principal architects of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Deal – about which he wrote an illuminating account entitled 'Wrestling with the Elephant'. Upon arrival he presented me with a copy of *Short v Kasparov: the Hijack of the 1993 World Chess Championship*, which I knew of, but had never seen. It took me 18 years before I could bring myself to look at these painful games again (I gave a lecture on the match in Ottawa last year) and I guess that in another decade or so I will be able to read Bill Hartston's book without flinching unduly.

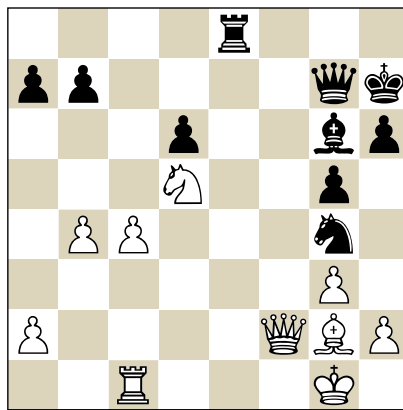
My simul at the RA Chess Club,



Short Stories

where I have been a frequent guest (along with Alexey Shirov), went smoothly and I dropped just half a point. Two days later I won a small rapid chess tournament, in part to raise money for the Canadian Olympic team, with a score of 5/5. By all accounts the lecture which I delivered soon afterwards was well received, although some were a little shocked by my Damascene conversion to the value of endgame study.

Canada is an absurdly large country. The flight to Edmonton took over four hours in itself. My tournament began with a disastrous first round defeat to the Israeli GM Victor Mikhalevski. From the fairly routine play, a draw would have been a normal result, but I failed to respond correctly when my opponent grabbed a scorching hot pawn just before the time-control. Instead of making two precise moves, leading to a decisive advantage, I flubbed it and lost miserably.



Mikhalevski-Short

Edmonton 2012

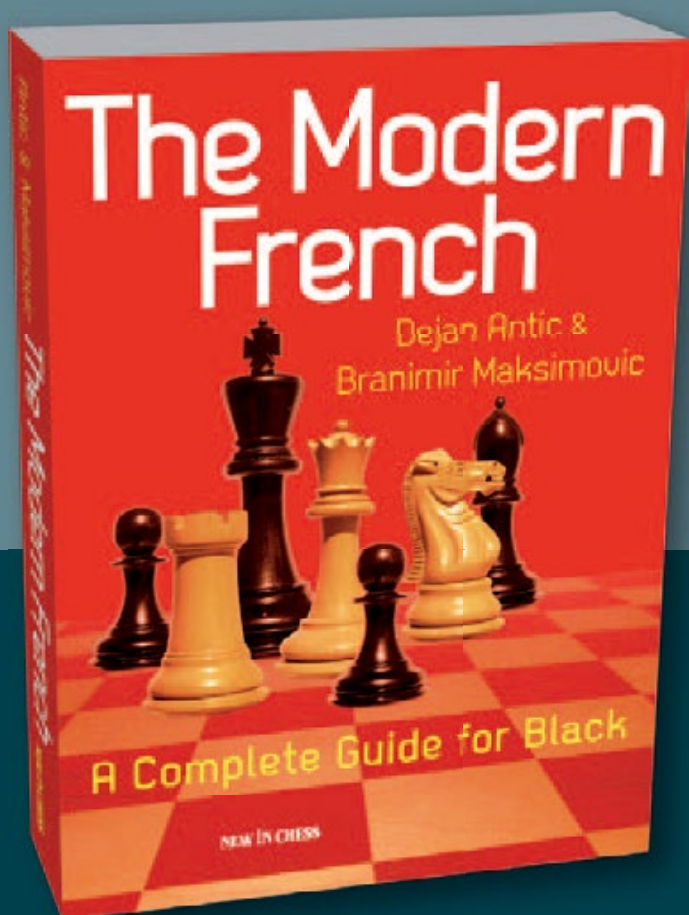
position after 24...g4

25. ♖xa7? This pawn robbery should have lost quickly. I failed to punish my opponent and played **25...h5** and lost, missing a reasonable drawing chance further on. However, after the correct 25... ♖b2 26. ♗f1 ♕g8! followed by ... ♗e4 White could have resigned.

Thereafter I was playing catch-up. Despite the odd scare, I basically made short work of the six Canadian

representatives, but had it not been for Mikhalevski's catastrophic penultimate day, in which he was routed by tail-ender Dale Haessel – around 350 points his inferior – and U.S. Women's Champion, Irina Krush, I would not have caught him, let alone surpassed him. My final tally of 7/9 – one point clear of the field – may have looked, to those who had not followed the event closely, like a convincing victory, but it was really anything but.

It was a very friendly event – well organized by Micah Hughey with sterling support from Vlad Rekhson. All were delighted by the great showing of local man Robert Gardner, who justly earned an IM norm. Micah, fine fellow that he is, has promised to axe the loathsome double rounds next year. With growing sponsorship likely for Calgary in 2013, the oil-rich province of Alberta is now making a small but increasingly important contribution to the chess calendar. ■



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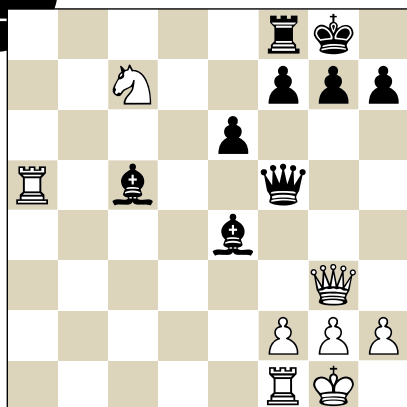
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Forcing Moves Solutions of page 59

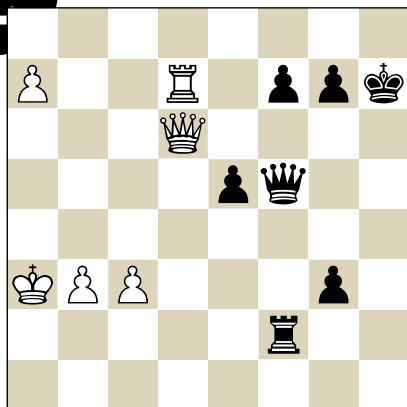
1



Vallejo-Kasparov
Linares 2005

The king of the K's lacked any chinks in his armour, and always seemed to see one move deeper than anyone: **1...♙xf2+! 2.♖xf2 ♖xa5 3.♘xe6! ♙xg2! 0-1**

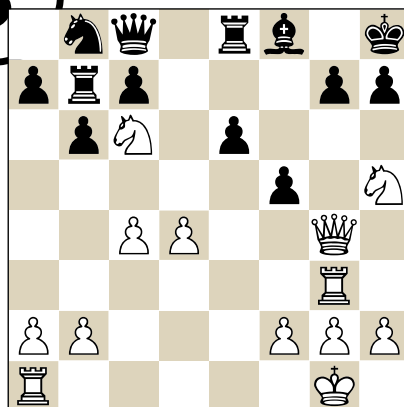
2



J. Polgar-Khalifman
Zurich rapid 2009

Make some popcorn and feed this to your favourite engine for sport. Watch 4 queens and 2 rooks trade punches for moves on end; uniquely both kings are immune to quick mate. Predictably Judit tanked quickly: **1...g2 2.a8 ♖g1 ♖ 3.♖d8? ♖c1+ 4.♔b4 ♖e4+ 5.c4 ♖f3 6.♖f6 ♖xb3+ 0-1**. Is white worse, or lost, on **3.♖ad5!? ♖c1+ 4.♔b4 ♖f4+ 5.♔b5 5.c4 ♖d4!** skewers two queens, while if **5...♖xc3, 6.♖xf7!!! ♖xf7? 7.♖h1+ ♔g8 8.♖d8+ ♖f8 9.♖1d5+ holds**, though **6...♖e4!** seems to favour Black... **5...♖f1+ 6.♔b6** and now Rybka4 first tries **6...♖e1 7.♖6c6!**, then switches to the logical **6...e4!** with scads more preposterous lines in the offing.

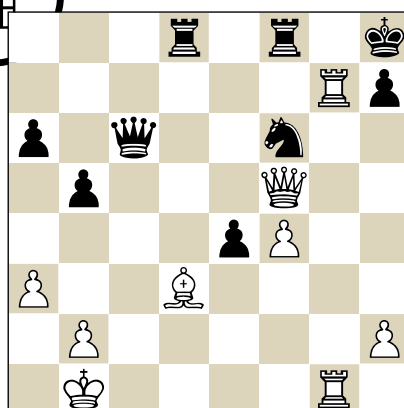
3



Karpov-Stojanovic
Valjevo 2007

The dashing young master from Zlatoust vanquished a pantheon of Soviet legends with killer technique and a sharp white repertoire featuring the Keres Attack vs. the Sicilian. **1.♖h4 ♘xc6?** Missing a stock threat, but Black is busted. Herr Computer gives a funny alternative: **1...h6 2.♘f6! ♙e7 3.♘xe7 ♖xe7 4.♘g8!** with threats on e7/h6. Or **1...♘d7 2.♘e5! ♘xe5 3.♘f6! 2.♘f6 h6 3.♖xh6+ 1-0**

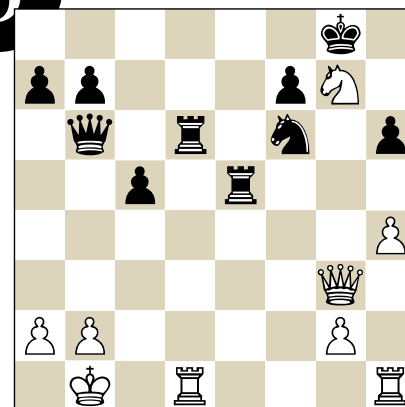
4



Kramnik-Rashkovsky
Moscow 1991

Kramnik's positional genius culminates in combinations of wonderful mathematic clarity. We associate Vlad with the ancient Berlin Wall, not the Sveshnikov Sicilian he once favoured! **1.♖g5!** Threatens **2.♖xh7+**. **1...♖d7 2.♖h6** Typical Kramnik: simple and deadly. Now **3.♖xh7+** looms. **2...♖c5** Black can't escape the pin and hold mating squares, e.g. **2...♖d5 3.♖xd7. 3.♙xe4! ♖ff7? 4.♖xh7+ 1-0**

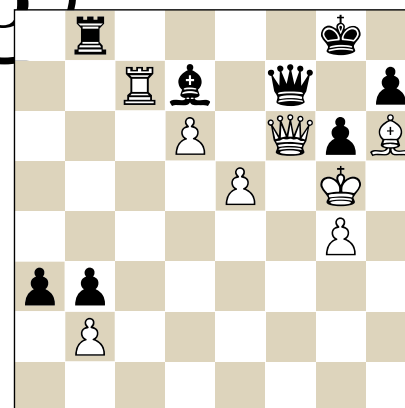
5



Jonkman-Kasimdzhanov
Wijk aan Zee (Sonnevanck) 1999

The dark-horse Uzbekistani winner of the 2004 FIDE Championship (at age 25), is a sharp positional player with a venomous tactical eye. Here he unveiled a marvellous resource: **1...♘g4!!** and White should settle for **2.♖xd6 ♖xd6 3.♖xg4 ♖g6+! 3...♖d3+!? and ...♖g6. 4.♖xg6 fxg6 5.♖d1=** If **2.♘f5?!, 2...♖xd1+ 3.♖xd1 ♖g6 4.♖xg4 ♖xf5**. Instead, White succumbed to shock: **2.♖xg4?! ♖g6 3.♖c8+ (3.♖f3) 3...♙xg7 4.♖d8** (in for a penny, in for a pound; but Black is already a pawn ahead, with initiative) **4...♖f6! 5.g4?? ♖e2 0-1**.

6



Kortchnoi-Tal
Erevan 1962

Viktor was most at home in the kind of complex positions many dread. **1.♖xd7! ♖xd7 2.e6 ♖a7** Rybka suggests **2...♖b5+ 3.♔h4 g5+ 4.♔h5 ♖e8+ 5.♔xg5 ♖g6+ 6.♖xg6+ hxg6 7.d7 axb2 8.e7** but the text is more artistic: **3.♖e5! axb2 4.e7 ♔f7 5.d7! 1-0** (**5...♖xd7 6.♖f6+ mates**).

Prague



ANEZKA KRUIKOVÁ

At the end of a fascinating fight, Peter Svidler and David Navara treated the Prague chess fans to a riveting encore as they looked at the key moments of Game 3.

Master of the Grünfeld

The annual Čez Chess Trophy (named after main sponsor Čez, the largest electricity producer in the Czech Republic) saw another clash between David Navara and a world-class player. This time Peter Svidler came to Prague, a daunting challenge for the Czech number 1. Having survived an unpleasant position in the first encounter, the Russian champion struck with two wins in Games 2 and 3, before clinching a 3-1 victory with an easy draw on the final day. The highlight of the match was Game 3. Many consider Svidler to be the leading expert in the Grünfeld. You may begin to understand why if you play through this exciting game, guided by his lucid and informative comments.



NOTES BY

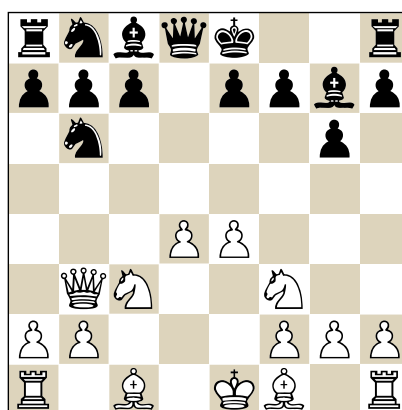
Peter Svidler

EO 52.9 – D90
David Navara
Peter Svidler
 Prague 2012 (3)

1. ♖f3 ♜f6

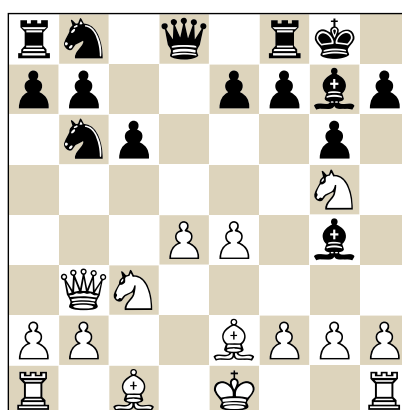
After a somewhat traumatic experience in the Maroczy in Game 1 I decided to shelve 1...g6 for the time being and see what David had prepared in the Anti-Grünfeld, an opening we both play a lot with black, and occasionally with white.

2. c4 g6 3. ♘c3 d5 4. cxd5 ♜xd5 5. ♙b3 ♞b6 6. d4 ♙g7 7. e4



As usual, I had expected something else – David lost an unpleasant game to Le Quang Liem with 7. ♙f4 recently, and I assumed he would lean in that direction. But the text-move is not what you would call a novelty...

7... ♙g4 8. ♙b5+ c6 9. ♘g5 0-0 10. ♙e2



A very fashionable line, made famous by the game my opponent won against the all-conquering Levon in Wijk

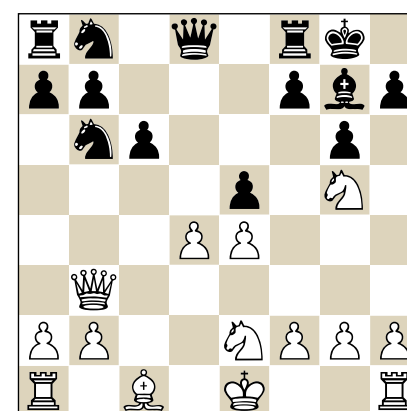
2012 – with black! I, however, first noticed this possibility more than a year ago, after this move order had been played by Illescas in the Spanish League against Negi, with a very stark follow-up – 10... ♙c8 was met by 11. h4!?

Deciding (not unreasonably) that this is likely to become popular eventually, I spent some time looking at this line, and after a while found a very curious idea, which seemed to equalize in some lines and lead to extremely unusual complications in others. ‘Finally I get to use it,’ I said to myself, and blitzed out:

10... ♙xe2 11. ♜xe2 e5

And now I got very lucky, of sorts – had the scoreline been different, David might have spent a bit more time here, looking at various options. But being one down and with this game being his last white, he plunged ahead aiming for complications and the promise of a mating attack.

In Aronian-Navara, Black played 11... ♜a6 here, and soon had an excellent position – but Lev’s play in that game left quite a bit to be desired, and I was certain David had something in mind there.



12. ♙h3

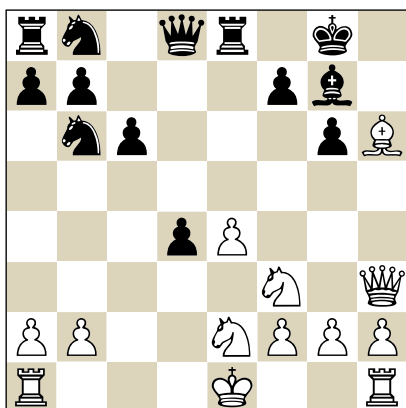
This looks very exciting, but in fact this move is wrong on two counts – it does not lead to anything particularly good for White, and there is a much better one available.

12. dxe5 h6 is, of course, the point of Black’s play – and after the normal 13. ♜f3 ♜8d7 he is, in fact, doing quite well. However, as soon as my pawn landed on e5, it dawned on me that in

my 'analysis' I had completely ignored 13. ♖h3!. After the pretty much forced 13... ♜d7 14. f4 ♜c5 15. ♔c2 ♜d3+ 16. ♙f1 Black is in a lot of trouble. But I did not have to panic for very long.

12...h6 13. ♜f3 exd4 14. ♙xh6 ♜e8!

Now Black is fine, and will be more than fine if White is not careful.



15.0-0-0

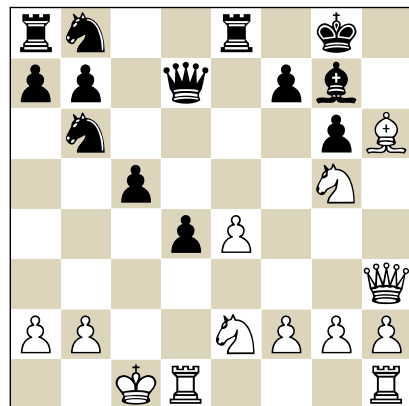
An understandable decision – David continues in the same vein as 12. ♔h3, hoping to create something tangible on the other side. However, White's king will become fair game as soon as Black solves his immediate problems. David was very critical of this move after the game, but the alternatives are not exactly rosy either:

- 15. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 16. ♜fxd4 ♜xe4 17.0-0-0 ♔f6, and Black is just fine;
- After 15. ♜g5 Black has a choice between the safe and equal 15... ♔d7 16. ♔xd7 ♜xd7 17. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 18. ♜xd4 c5 19. ♜c2 f6 and 15... ♙f6 16. f4 ♜c4, which looks extremely promising – Black is better prepared for a direct confrontation here;
- During the game I was mainly worried about 15. ♜g3, but after the clever 15... ♙f6! Black is doing very well: 16.0-0 ♔d7;
- 15.0-0 c5 16. ♜g5 is fine for Black too: 16... ♔d7 (16... ♙f6!?) 17. ♔h4 f6 18. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 19. ♜f3 ♜c6, and Black's monster pawn centre is ready to roll.

15...c5 16. ♜g5 ♔d7

The machine insists that 16... ♙f6! 17. ♔g3 ♜c6 18. h4 is safe for Black, and after 18... ♜c4 it is not hard to see

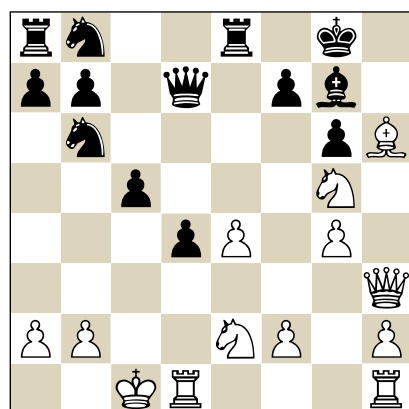
why – Black is first with real threats. But I wanted to drive White's forces back, and chose a more domesticated option.



17. ♔h4?!

This move is not objectively much worse than the alternative, but it makes things much more comfortable for Black, and therefore it is not the best choice.

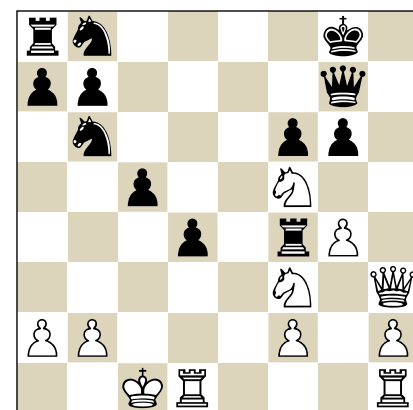
White should have played 17. g4:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

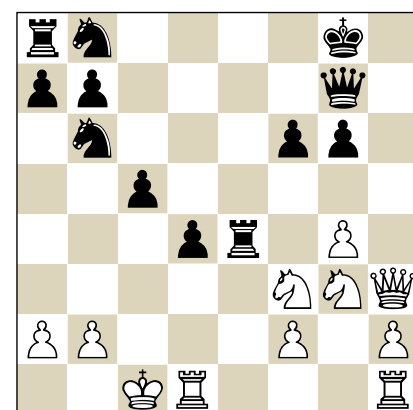
A) David was correctly worried about 17... ♙h8!?, and after 18. ♜f4 (18. ♙f8 f6!) 18... ♔c6 (18... f6 19. ♜f3 g5 20. ♜d3 ♔f7 leads to a very odd-looking position. Black seems to be OK here as well) the following Mar-tian line is suggested as best play by the machine: 19. ♜d3 (19. ♙f8 ♔f6) 19... ♜d7 20. ♜f3 ♜f6 21. ♜xf7 ♙xf7 22. g5 ♜fd7 23. ♜xg6+ ♙g8! 24. ♜xh8 ♜e5, and Black is supposedly better. I will offer no opinion on this – I planned to play 17... f6;

B) 17... f6 18. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 19. ♜f3 ♜xe4 20. ♜g3, and now both David and I thought 20... ♜f4 21. ♜f5! was very dangerous for Black, but even here, after the cool



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

21... ♔h7! 22. ♔g3 (22. ♜h6+ ♙f8 is wrong) 22... ♜xf3 23. ♔xf3 gxf5 24. gxf5 ♜c6 25. ♜hg1+ ♙f7 26. ♜g6 ♜h8 Black is doing fine, although after 27. ♔g3 (27. ♜d1 ♔xh2) 27... ♜e7 28. ♔c7 the game is only just beginning.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

However, 20... ♜e7!, preparing to meet 21. ♜f5 with 21... gxf5 22. gxf5 ♔h7! 23. ♜hg1+ ♙f8, gives Black a big edge. **17...f6 18. ♙xg7 ♙xg7 19. ♜h3 ♜c6** Now Black is clearly better.

20. ♜d3

A good practical choice, White can ill afford to do nothing and wait for the pawns to appear on d3 and c4.

20...g5

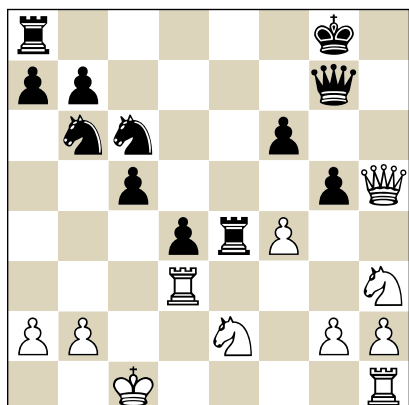
Allowing ♜g3 and ♜ef4 may have been an option, but I thought this move should be winning.

21. ♔h5 ♜xe4 22. f4

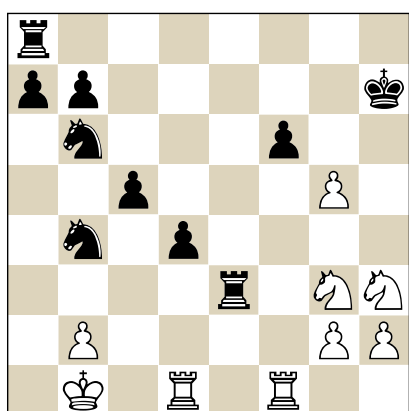
Trying to open some files on the king-side. 22. ♜g3 ♜h4 23. ♔f3 ♜e8 is completely losing.

Here I paused and tried to take stock. My initial assessment was that I needed one final long calculation to end the game, but the more I thought, the less obvious the solution appeared.

Finally I settled on the move which forced the queen trade while improving the position of my king. Or so I assumed.



22...Qf7 22...Qb4 23. Kg3 Qf7 looked totally winning, until I spotted 24. Bxg5+, and after 24...Qf8! 25. Qh6+! Qe8 26. Kg7! Qc4+ 27. Qc3 Qxa2+ 28. Qb1 Qxc3+ 29. bxc3 Qb3+ 30. Qc1 Qxc3+ 31. Qb1 Black has no mate, and will eventually have to switch to the defence with ...Te7 if he wants to win, and then it will be White's turn for a while. Black is better after 22...Qh7 23. Qxh7+ Qxh7 24. Qg3 Qb4, e.g. 25. Bdd1 Te3 26. fxg5 Qxa2+ 27. Qb1 Qb4 28. Bhf1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM



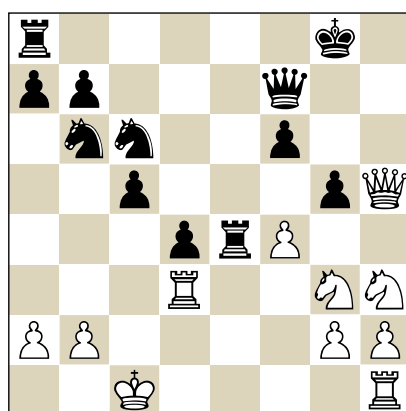
ANEŽKA KRUIKOVÁ

With a determined look Peter Svidler pushes 11...e5. 'However, as soon as my pawn landed on e5, it dawned on me that in my 'analysis' I had completely ignored 13.Qh3!'

and now the fantastic-looking 28...Qc4! 29. gxf6 Te5!, cutting off the knights and preparing to surround and bury the f6-pawn.

23. Qg3

This came as a surprise. I had expected 23. Qxf7+ Qxf7 24. Qg3, when after 24...Qb4 25. Bb3 Te3 26. Bxe3 dxe3 27. fxg5 Qxa2+ 28. Qd1 Bd8+ 29. Qe2 Bd2+ 30. Qxe3 Bxb2 Black is clearly better, but it was objectively stronger than the text.

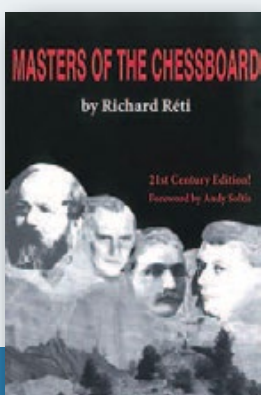


23...Qc4+

A case of a very useful blunder. Amazingly, despite seeing it in a lot of other lines, I managed to completely forget 24. Bc3 was possible here.

I almost played 23...Qb4, before noticing that White can continue the trapeze act with 24. Qxe4!? Qxd3+ (24...Qc4+ 25. Bc3! – and I *did* see it here...) 25. Qd2, and Black will need to take a few difficult decisions. Objectively, he is still better after 25...Qxb2 26. Qh6 Q2c4+ 27. Qc1 Qd7! 28. fxg5 f5, but I think I can be excused for not being entirely sure about that during the game.

24. Bc3 Not, of course, 24. Qd2 Qb4! 25. Qg6+ Qf8 26. Qxf6+ Qe8, and Black's king escapes easily, while White's definitely doesn't. Luckily for me, my next few moves were forced, and I managed to collect myself and get back to work re-assessing the scenery.



RÉTI'S "OTHER" CLASSIC

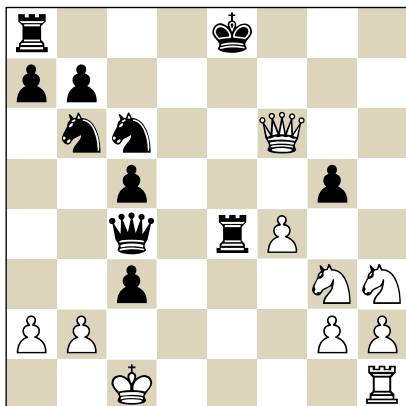
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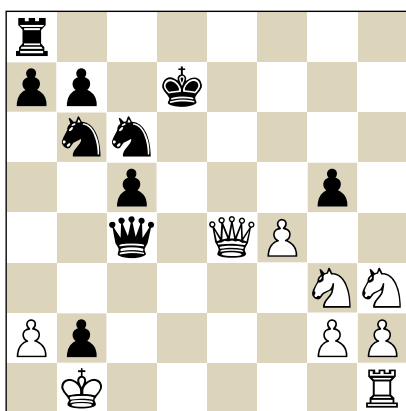
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24...dxc3 25.♖g6+ ♔f8 26.♖xf6+ ♕e8 Despite the king run, Black is still in control – White can't do much with only one active piece.



27.♖g6+ Here and on the next move 27.b3 loses to 27...♖b4: 28.♖g6+ ♔d7 29.♕xe4 ♖a3+ 30.♔d1 ♖d8!, and with the final piece joining the fray, Black wins easily.

27...♔d7 28.♖xe4 cxb2+ 29.♔b1



29...♖e8?

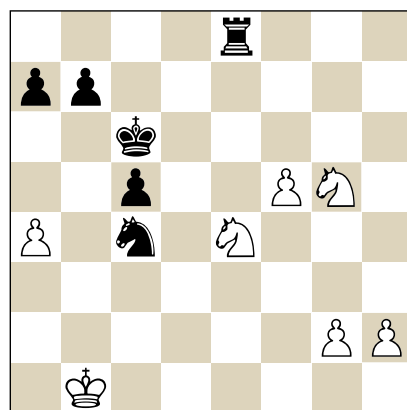
I played this very fast – while David was thinking on move 27, I'd calculated the whole line ending in 35...♖e6, and decided I had too little time to spend it on alternatives to what was clearly a good move. However, this was a mistake.

After 29...♕d4! Black is just winning – there is nothing White can do to prevent the b6-knight joining the attack with decisive force: 30.♖xb7+ (30.♕f2 ♕a4; 30.♖d1 ♕d5) 30...♔d8 31.♖e4 ♕d5, and White can resign.

30.♖d1+?

But it goes unpunished.

After 30.♖xc4 ♕xc4 31.♕xg5 ♕d4 32.♕3e4! (32.a4 ♖e3 is totally lost, but White is just in time to block the e-file) 32...♕b5 33.a4 ♕ba3+ 34.♕a2 ♕c6 35.f5 b1♖+ 36.♖xb1 ♕xb1 37.♕xb1



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

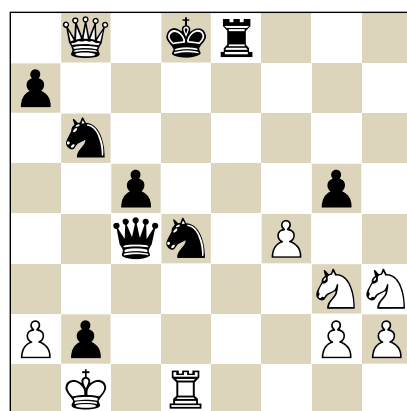
Black is better, but his task will not be easy at all – the f-pawn is very strong.

30...♕d4 31.♖xb7+ ♔d8

32.♖b8+ ♔d7

Gaining a little time.

33.♖b7+ ♔d8 34.♖b8+



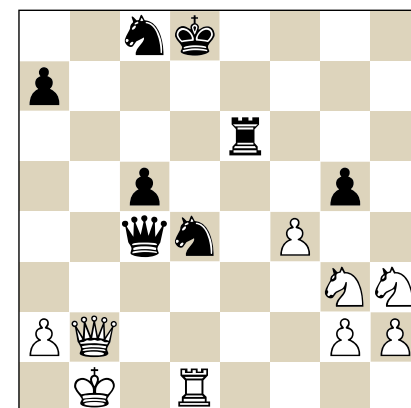
34...♕c8! 35.♖xb2

35.♖b3 ♕d6! (there is also the more prosaic 35...♖c1+) 36.♖xc4 ♕xc4 is totally lost for White – Black will soon have a mating attack here.

35...♖e6

The white knights paint a sad picture. There is no defence – too many of White's resources are stuck on the

opposite side of the board, unable to help the king.

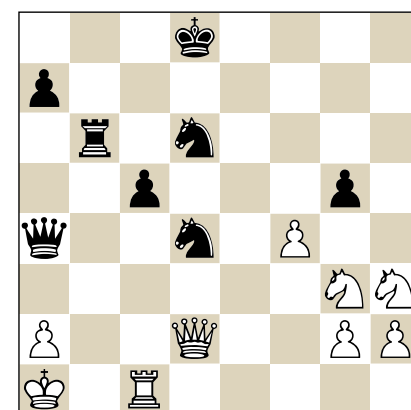


36.♖c1

This hastens the end, but I was rather disappointed that I did not get to demonstrate the main idea: 36.♕a1 ♖b6 37.♖c1 ♕d6!, and despite the queen trade, Black still gets through to the king: 38.♖xc4 ♕xc4 39.♕f5 (39.a4 ♕c7 is simpler: 40.♖c1 ♕b3+ 41.♕b1 g4 42.♕g5 – 42.♖xc4 gxf3!, and White either loses the rook or the h-pawn will queen – 42...♕xc1+ 43.♕xc1 ♖b2 winning) 39...♕a3! 40.♕e3 (40.♕xd4 cxd4 41.♖xd4+ ♕e8 is mate) 40...♕c8 41.♖c1 ♕e2!, and after 42.♖e1 (42.♕c4 ♖a6! 43.♕xa3 ♕xc1 winning) 42...gxf4 Black gets to the knight on e3, and wins.

36...♖a4 Or 36...♖d3+ 37.♕a1 ♖b6 38.♕f2 ♖a6 – Black has a pleasant choice now.

37.♕a1 ♖b6 38.♖d2 ♕d6



Black's domination is complete. After: **39.♖c3 ♕c4 40.♖d3 ♖b4 41.♖b3 ♖e1+**

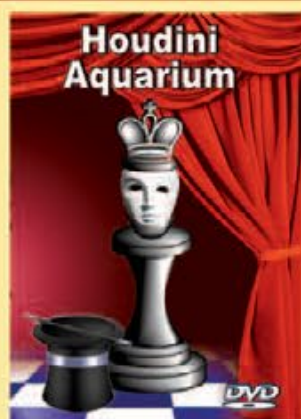
White resigned.

A very exciting game – all the more so because of the many serious mistakes we both made, I suppose. ■

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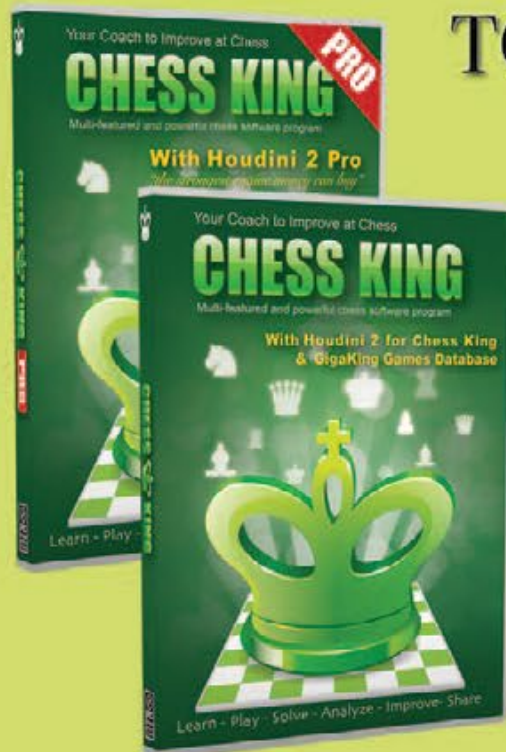
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Bent Larsen's prophecies

For many years, the label attached by Petrosian to the young players of the seventies, 'The Chess Informant's children' remained somewhat shrouded in mystery for **Mihail Marin**. All authors quoting the ninth World Champion referred to the fact that this generation depended on the latest novelties and concrete opening lines, but the Rumanian grandmaster was not sure whether that was such a bad thing really. In order to be truly creative one must first assimilate the existing information, isn't that true?

I believe that my doubts were only resolved in the computerized era. I am puzzled when I hear young players complaining after a loss that: 'I had a slight +0,34 advantage' or: 'I was winning by +3.78'. Personally, I would be more convinced if they had shown me a concrete plan, accessible to human understanding, rather than these inexpressive numbers.

A few years ago, the following thought hit me: what if Petrosian actually referred to the $\pm$, $\mp$ etc. system of annotation so typical for the *Informant*? While helping the publishers to deliver some information within a limited space, the absence of verbal explanations almost completely eliminates the personal character of the comments. Concrete lines and their 'cold' evaluations are submitted to the scrutiny of fashion, but certain phrases of great players and thinkers are bound to maintain their validity forever.

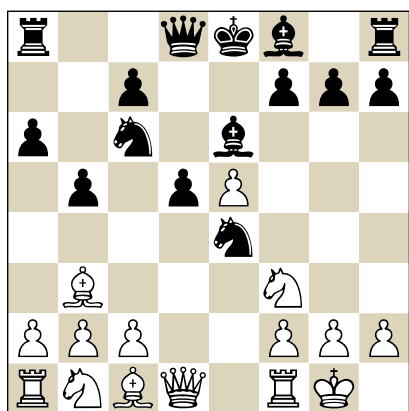
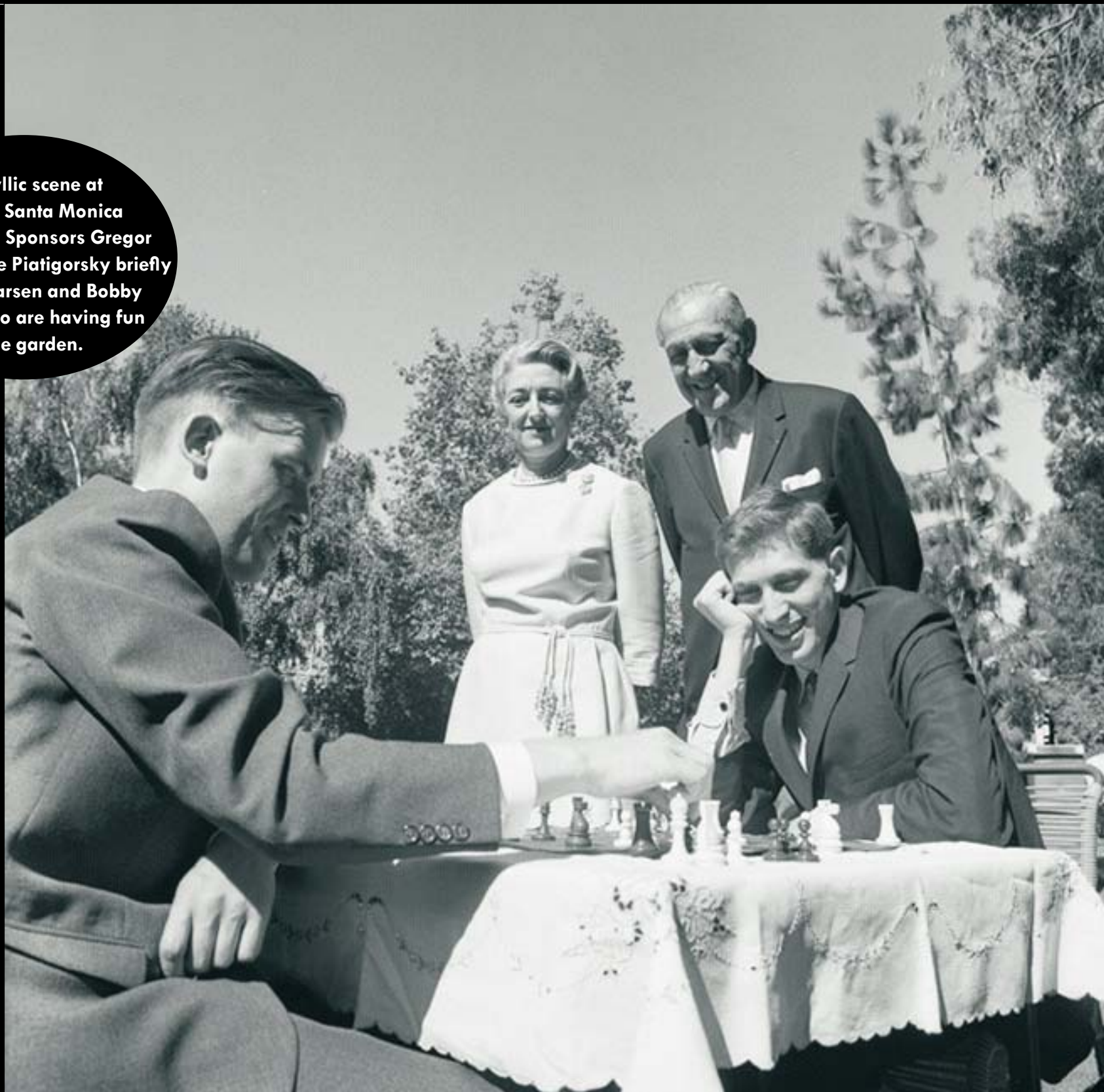
As starting point for a detailed discussion on this theme I have taken a game

between the two players that the Soviets regarded as the main threat to their hegemony back in the '60s. One of them, the winner, happened to be a prolific annotator and writer, and his comments to this game have a perennial value. Taking into account the ulterior course of history, I believe that some of them have a marked prophetic character.

RL 30.7 – C82
Bobby Fischer
Bent Larsen
 Santa Monica 1966

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 a6 4.
 ♙a4 ♘f6 5.0-0 ♗xe4 6.d4 b5 7.
 ♙b3 d5 8.dxe5 ♙e6

An idyllic scene at the 1966 Santa Monica tournament. Sponsors Gregor and Jacqueline Piatigorsky briefly join Bent Larsen and Bobby Fischer, who are having fun in the garden.



Over the years, I found no better way of explaining the fascination caused by the Open Variation of the Spanish Opening than mentioning two highly qualified, but also contradictory evaluations of its merits.

In his famous *Die Moderne Schachpartie*, Dr. Tarrasch, who also is the godfather of the variation, considers Black's position to be better on account of his active knight, queenside and central mobile majority as well as the weakness of the white e5-pawn.

Almost half a century later, the world's best player and renowned theoretician Paul Keres showed himself rather sceptical, pointing out the exposed position of the e4-knight, the weakness of the queenside pawns and White's attacking chances on the kingside thanks to the advanced e-pawn. We can see that both esteemed gen-

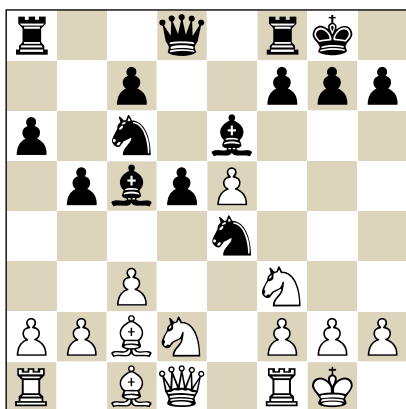
tlemen referred to the same strategic elements, but drew completely opposite conclusions! Paradoxically, both seem to be right, and I always thought that the final outcome of the opening depends on which of the above evaluations is more closely related to the actual course of the game. If Black can make use of his active knight, put his pawns into motion, or surround the e5-pawn, his position would look very nice indeed. But White would get on top if he managed to clear the b1-h7 diagonal, put pressure on d5 and b5 and create tactical threats around the f6-square.

However, something was missing

from the picture: the domain between these opposite opinions was too wide and required some guidance. In order to get at least some stability (in chess, geometry, or the Universe), at least three reference points are needed. Some months ago, I managed to widen up my perspective when I came across the following comment on this game by Larsen: 'I had just written a booklet analysing this Open Variation of the Ruy seen from Black's point of view. I thought that ordinary chess players (amateurs, as explained in a comment written 12 years later – MM) ought to play such openings instead of following the latest fashion.'

In order to suit amateur play, a variation is supposed to be original, offer chances to unbalance the position, but also to be riskier than others. In other words, navigating within the limits traced by Tarrasch and Keres implies an increased element of uncertainty; this was the kind of element I missed when trying to understand the essence of the Open Spanish!

9.c3 ♖c5 10.♘bd2 0-0 11.♙c2



At that time, the approved continuations were 11...f5 and 11...♞xf2, while

11...♞xd2 was slightly less popular.

11...♙f5!?

Larsen chose this rare continuation both for his book and for this ambitious game. Apparently, he also liked having three reference points when evaluating a variation, since in the booklet he had written: 'Keres shows sympathy, Euwe has little faith, Pachman considers this move weak.' Abstractly speaking, I would observe that Black defends his central knight, aiming to incline the balance towards Tarrasch' evaluation.

In his notes to the game, Larsen adds a psychological dimension to his discourse: 'At this time, the variation proved a happy choice against Fischer.' My feeling is that he did not refer to the opening phase. As will be revealed soon, Fischer played impeccably up to a certain point. Larsen's statement was probably related to the typical Open Spanish structures, with their aforementioned element of uncertainty. Two almost imperceptible mistakes were enough to turn a better white position into an unpleasant one.

Remarkably, a similar psychological situation occurred 12 years later on the occasion of the match for the world title between Karpov and Kortchnoi, Baguio 1978. In 1977, Karpov had faced this same variation twice.

'What do you know about this variation, Mr. Champ?'

Although he obtained an advantage from the opening each time, he eventually lost to Beliavsky (apparently on time) and had problems reaching a draw against Smyslov. These games may have offered Kortchnoi a hint about his mighty opponent's weak points. Previously, he had successfully played the French Defence in the Candidates' finals against Karpov (1974) and Spassky (1977), and most of the

commentators and spectators were expecting a continuation of the theoretical discussion in this opening. However, the challenger decided to take up Larsen's 'amateur line' as his main weapon, at least in the first half of the match. His choice was entirely justified in the games in which a complex middlegame, without a clear-cut evaluation, arose. Karpov succeeded in winning two games in which he

managed to eliminate the element of uncertainty right from the opening. In the eighth game he got a decisive attack, and in the 14th he transposed by force to a pleasant endgame with opposite-coloured bishops, one of his specialties.

By a strange coincidence, Larsen wrote a book on the Baguio match. He must have felt very much at home when commenting on the games in which Kortchnoi had been Black. When trying to explain the challenger's opening strategy, he imagined the following witty discourse, addressed to Karpov: 'Look, there is this rare variation of the



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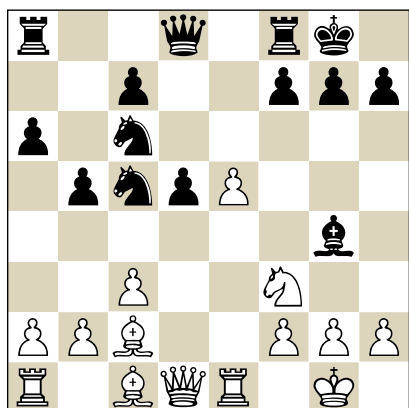
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Ruy. In my camp we have studied it very deeply. The books have very little to say about it and they are full of mistakes. What do you know about this variation, Mr. Champ? If you do not know enough, you are free to get out on move 10, or 9 or 8, or maybe you would like to find another first move?' After many years of experience with the Open Ruy Lopez I can testify that the last sentence is not a mere 'bravado'. More than once, I had the surprise of facing 5.d3 or 4. ♖xc6 against strong players who usually went for the main lines. In some rare cases, 1.e4 specialists preferred to start the game with the super-safe 1.c4, although this was not part of their usual repertoire. Finally, one of my team mates in the national team confessed to me once that he plays the Italian instead of the Spanish only because he is afraid of 5... ♖xe4.

12. ♖b3 ♗g4 13. ♖xc5 ♖xc5 14. ♖e1



This is a critical position from Karpov's games from 1977 and from two at Baguio 1978. Black's main ideas (according to Tarrasch' scenario) are preparing ...d4, attacking e5, or regrouping with ...♗h5-g6, ...♖e6, and then prepare a massive advance of the queenside pawns.

White's task is somewhat easier to explain: he must prevent all the above ideas in order to consolidate his space advantage. This sounds like easier said than done, but Fischer's powerful play shows that such a pretentious approach is within White's reach.

14... ♖e8 This natural move corresponds to the second idea exposed

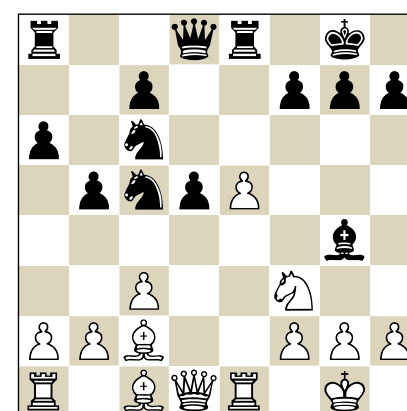
above. Kortchnoi tried two different continuations related to the other aforementioned plans. In the second match game he introduced the novelty 14...d4!? and in the fourth used the supposedly mistaken 14...♗h5. In both cases, Black reached a draw without too much fight.

Karpov made use of Larsen's 'advice' and deviated on move 9 in the eighth, 10th and 12th games, and even on the first move (1.c4) in the sixth! In the 14th game he returned to the then main continuation 9.c3 and Kortchnoi once again showed himself ready to repeat the variation. It is likely that he would have chosen a third alternative on the 14th move if he had been given a chance (Karpov came up with a new idea on move 13, but more about this later).

This kind of flexibility reminds me of the classical Scheveningen tabiya from the early Karpov-Kasparov matches, in which the differences from one game to another were made by semi-waiting moves like ...♖a8-b8 or ♗e3-g1. In other words, the line that Larsen recommends to the amateurs of the year 1966 proved viable for such a high-level battle like the Baguio match.



In their match in Merano in 1981, Karpov and Kortchnoi continued to enrich the theory of the Open Spanish.



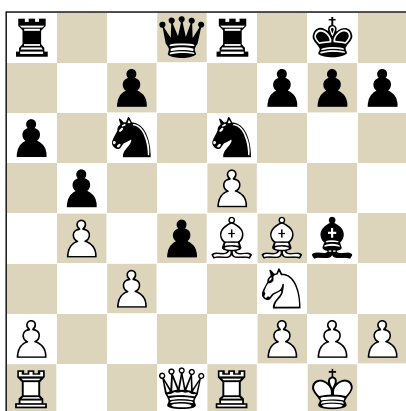
15. ♗e3!

Typical for Fischer: very strong and easy to explain at the same time! White prevents ...d4 and forces the knight to retreat in order to play ♖d3 before Black gets to play ...♗h5(-g6). This will lead to the weakening of the dark squares (after ...g6), which is quite dangerous in the absence of the black king's bishop.

The approved continuation then was 15. ♗f4, which was supposed to lead to an advantage according to an old analysis by Rabinovich. Larsen mentions that the rehabilitation of the variation started with his questioning this old evaluation, which offers an excellent example of how trends and fashions change throughout history. Even more interesting is that in 1977 Karpov failed to understand the merits of Fischer's opening play and preferred the old move in both his tournament games!

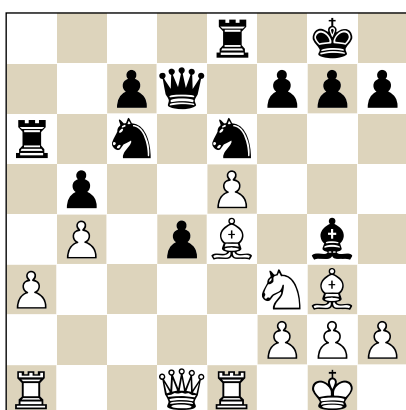
The critical line goes: 15...d4 (15... ♗h5 had been suggested by Keres, but led to an advantage for White after 16.

♙g3 ♘e6 17. ♖d2!? ♘e7 18. ♘h4! in Karpov-Smyslov, Tilburg 1977) 16.b4 (the modest 16.h3 ♙h5 17.cxd4 leads to simplifications: 17... ♙xf3 18. ♖xf3 ♘xd4 19. ♖c3 ♘xc2 20. ♖xc2 ♘e6 21. ♖ad1. In Karpov-Beliavsky, Leningrad 1977, Black played the passive 21... ♖e7, allowing f4-f5 fairly soon in the game. 21... ♖h4! 22. ♙e3 ♖ed8 would have been safer, ensuring Black reasonable stability) 16... ♘e6 17. ♙e4



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

This is where the old analysis ended, but Larsen wrote that he could not see an advantage after 17... ♖d7. I entirely agree, but feel that he should also have suggested a continuation after the natural 18. ♙g3. After a few hours of analysis my favourite was 18...a5!? (18... ♘g5?! drops a pawn to 19. ♙xc6 ♖xc6 20. ♘xd4, while 18... ♖ad8 runs into 19. ♙h4!, for instance 19... ♘e7 20.cxd4 ♘xd4 21. ♖xd4 ♖xd4 22. ♘xd4 ♖xd4 23.f3 ♙e6 24.a3, with an active bishop pair and a space advantage) 19.a3 axb4 20.cxb4 ♖a6

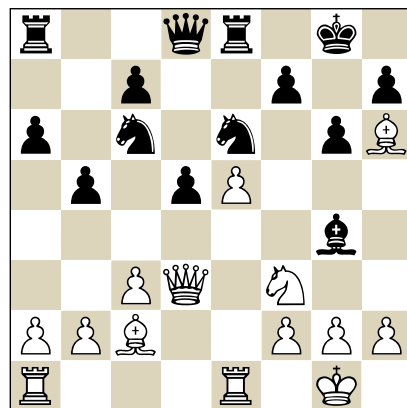


ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Black has got rid of the pin and has consolidated his c6-knight. The immediate threat is ... ♘g5. A possible

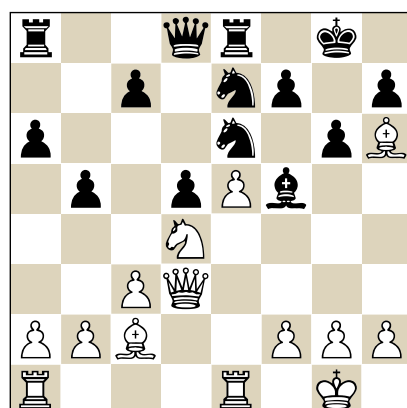
continuation is 21. ♖d3 ♙xf3 22.gxf3 ♘e7 23. ♙xh7+ ♖f8. The better structure and perfect coordination offers Black adequate compensation for the missing pawn.

15... ♘e6 16. ♖d3 g6 17. ♙h6



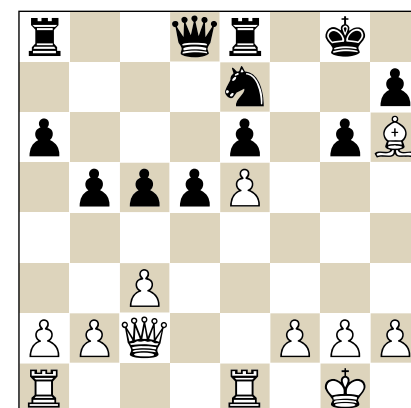
17... ♘e7!? An interesting psychological moment. Larsen explains that 17... ♙f5 would have transposed to the line given in the comment on the next move. By withdrawing his bishop one move later, he will force a choice on Fischer, possibly one of the most difficult situations in a chess player's life. Although Larsen does not explicitly admit it, the evaluation of the two lines leaves little doubt about the fact that Black has lost the theoretical battle and has to gamble in a typically complicated Open Spanish middlegame.

18. ♘d4 ♙f5



19. ♘xf5 Larsen knew that Fischer treasured the bishop pair and had surely counted on this move. My personal feeling is that it is also the best in the circumstances (which could justify awarding 17... ♘e7 a '?!' rather than a '!' if chess was only about moves and not about emotions).

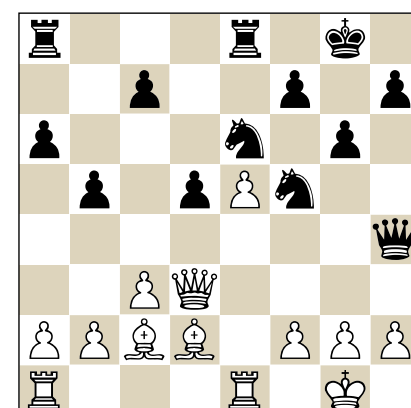
Larsen gives 19. ♖d2 ♙xc2 20. ♖xc2 ♘xd4 21.cxd4 ♘f5 22. ♙e3 ♖e6, followed by ...c6, as solid though quite passive for Black. Personally, I would do anything to avoid a position with a backward pawn and would go for 20... c5!? 21. ♘xe6 fxe6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Strategically, Black seems to be OK, but the kingside weakness becomes quite relevant after 22. ♙g5! ♖d7 23. ♙f6, followed by ♖ad1-d3, h2-h4, etc.

19... ♘xf5 20. ♙d2 ♖h4



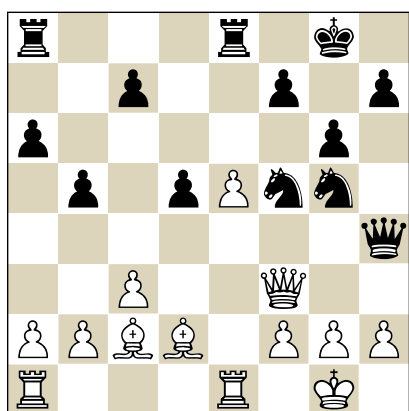
The position has become quite interesting. The evaluation very much depends on whether Black can maintain his apparently shaky position. His main problem is the f5-knight which, if forced to abandon its advanced position, would remain passive and allow White to gain space by a massive pawn advance.

Larsen considers the position to be roughly equal, which is too optimistic, but only because of a concrete detail.

21. ♖f1!? Another typical move for Fischer, who usually looked for clear-cut plans, avoiding unclear lines unless really necessary. The otherwise elegant queen retreat threatens g3, fol-

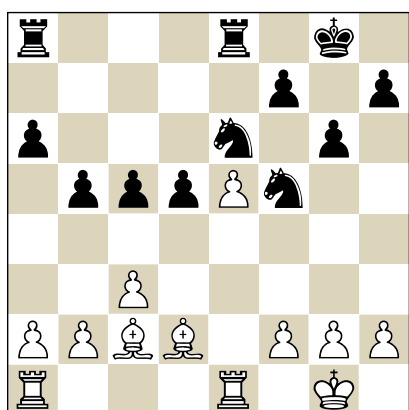
lowed by f4, with a strong, maybe decisive, kingside initiative. He may simply have overlooked Larsen's answer. Larsen points out that 21. ♖xd5? would lose material to 21... ♖ad8 22. ♖c6 ♜e7.

The main alternative (and, as we will see, the strongest move) was 21. ♖f3, attacking the knight and preparing to launch the same kind of attack with g3, etc. Larsen analyses 21... ♜g5, when White has a choice.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

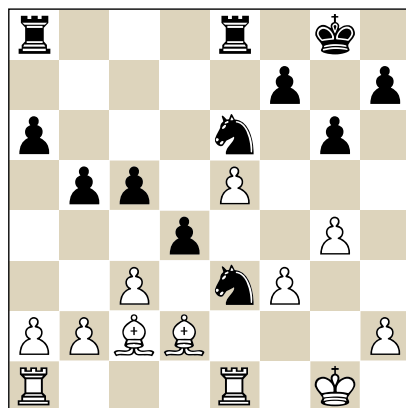
22. ♖f4 ♖xf4 23. ♜xf4 ♜e6 24. ♜d2 c5. Larsen assessed this interesting position once again as unclear. At first, I somehow doubted that Black can resist the advance of the kingside pawns sustained by the powerful bishops, but a couple of hours of analysis convinced me that the knights have sufficient dynamism to maintain the balance.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

25.g4 ♜h4 and 25.f4 h5 are not too dangerous, and the most principled move seems to be 25.f3!?, threatening g2-g4. (25.a4 yields little, and Black can react with 25... ♖ed8!?, preparing ...d4. Compared with the main line, White fails to win the 'weak' f-pawn

after 25. ♜xf5 gxf5 26. ♖e3 f4 27. ♖f3 because of back rank problems: 27... ♖ad8 28. ♖e1 d4 29. ♜xf4 dxc3 30.bxc3 ♜xf4 31. ♖xf4 ♖xe5!, and Black is even slightly better) 25...d4! 26.g4 ♜e3!.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

A very elegant way to neutralize the bishops. Once the f4-square has been

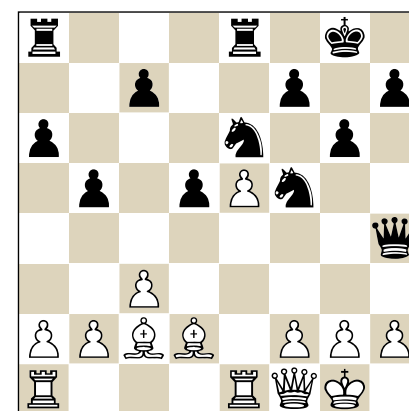
Seeing this confirmation of Larsen's evaluation, I more than ever understood why the Soviets regarded him as an 'original strategist'.

chronically weakened, Black gives up a pawn in order to eliminate the dark-squared bishop. 27. ♜xe3 dxe3 28. ♖xe3 ♖ad8. The e6-knight is at least as strong as the remaining bishop, while the control of the only open file gives Black the initiative.

Seeing this confirmation of Larsen's evaluation, I more than ever understood why the Soviets regarded him as an 'original strategist'.

However, Larsen is less accurate when

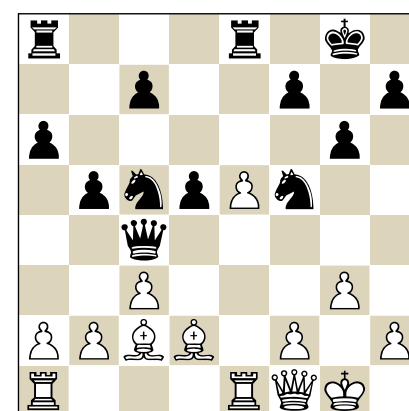
it comes to concrete variations; in this case, his trademark optimism makes him a bit superficial. With the knight on g5, 22. ♖xd5! is entirely possible. Larsen's line continues with 22... ♖ad8 23. ♜xg5 ♖xg5 24. ♖c6 ♖e6 25. ♖xc7 ♖d2 'with good play'. In fact, after the obvious 26. ♜b3 the pressure against f7 restricts Black's possibilities, making his compensation for the lost pawns questionable.



21... ♜c5!

Making full use of the knights' versatility. The knight takes control of the d3-square, which will prove essential one move later, while the e6-square is cleared for his relatively unstable colleague.

22.g3 ♖c4



Without fearing ♜d3 on the strength of the previous move.

23. ♖g2?!

Fischer must have been hypnotized by the weakness of the dark squares on Black's kingside. When ceding absolute control of the other half of the board to Black, he may have underestimated the communication between the wings.

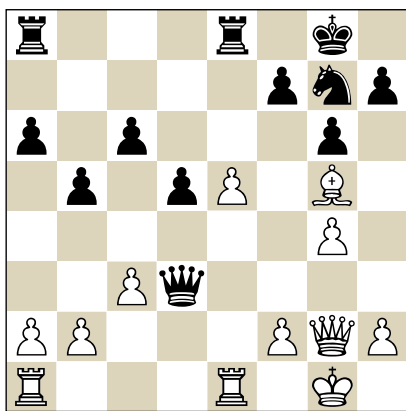
He should have played the less ambi-

tious 23. ♖xc4 bxc4, with equal chances in a complex position.

23... ♖d3!

This is an echo of the line involving the pawn sacrifice ... ♖e3 from my analysis on the 21st move. After eliminating one bishop Black can exploit the weaknesses left behind by White's aggressive pawn play in the opening.

24. ♗xd3 ♖xd3 25. ♗g5 c6 26. g4 ♖g7



27. ♖e3

The conclusions of the comment on the 21st move should not make us underestimate Larsen's calculating skills. In fact, his sharp tactical skills were an important auxiliary to his original strategic play. In his notes for *Chess Informant*, Ivkov unsuspectingly recommends 27. ♖ad1, but Larsen had a deadly trump up his sleeve: 27... ♖xe5!

27... ♖d2!

The black queen's activity is very annoying. Although occupying an advanced position in the white territory, it hinders White's coordination. Larsen describes the situation very plastically: 'A little sand has got into the machinery of the attack.'

28.b3

White still has some hope. After ♖h3-h6 and ♗f6 (forcing ... ♖e6) he will only need to play g4-g5 in order to create the deadly threat of ♖xh7!+ followed by mate. He just lacks one tempo, though.

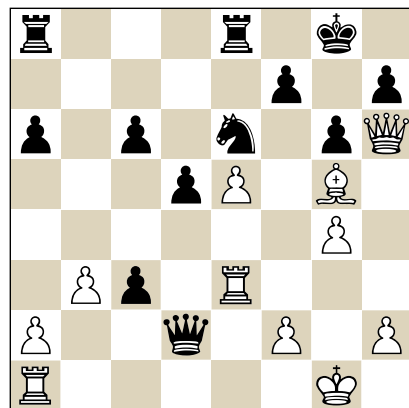
28...b4!

A strong move on the queenside, which will totally annihilate White's attack.

29. ♖h3?

Consistent, but losing. 29.cxb4? drops material to 29...d4. He should have resigned himself to defending the unpleasant endgame after 29.f3 bxc3 30. ♖xd2 cxd2 31. ♖d1 ♖e6 32. ♗f6 d4 33. ♖d3 c5 34. ♖3xd2 a5.

29...bxc3 30. ♖h6 ♖e6



Finally, Fischer understood that his attack is not working: 31. ♗f6 d4 32. ♖xh7+ ♖xh7 33. ♖h3+ ♖h6. So he resigned.

Summing up this memorable game, we can say that Larsen used a toy to kill a giant. Fischer famously hated losing, but how would he have reacted if he had been told that the variation chosen by Larsen was for amateurs?!

There are two interesting aspects connected to this paradoxical situation.

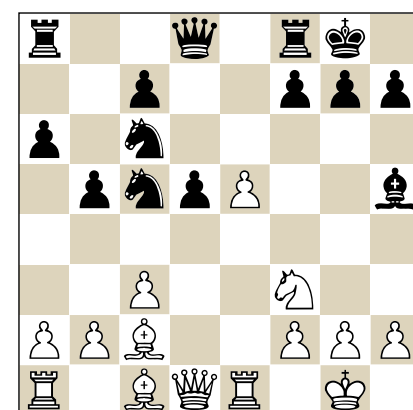
First of all, I would refer to Tal's comment (and display of modesty) 'We are all amateurs'. This pun seems to be working in many languages, by the way. Indeed, aficionado, dilettante, liubitel' and amateur all refer to someone who likes and derives pleasure from some activity. Larsen probably fell in love with the variation he had worked on and could not resist using it when given the chance, without thinking about the risk involved.

Secondly, I cannot help thinking of Botvinnik's way to assess the potential for progress of (already) strong grandmasters. According to the Patriarch, it is essential to publish articles and books in order to let the public judge the correctness of the analysis. If the readers remain silent, it means that the work has been done properly,

but a high number of letters to the editor pointing out errors should be an alarm signal. In this concrete case Larsen had a highly qualified judge (his opponent), and managed to pass the exam.

Times have changed and players can check their analysis with the computer. However, doing a good job when writing an article remains essential, at least this is what personal experience has taught me. Having published analysis on numerous opening variations over the past years, I have built up a very useful tool when it comes to preparing for a game. I simply choose a line according to my mood and use my own article to prepare. Although we are speaking about players of a completely different level, I feel that once again the universal character of Larsen's attitude is confirmed.

It is already remarkable that Larsen's 1966 booklet played such a role in the Baguio match, but his match book continued the trend. More than anything examined so far, the following comment certainly has a prophetic character.



This position was reached in the fourth game after 14... ♗h5. It was supposed to be dubious in view of

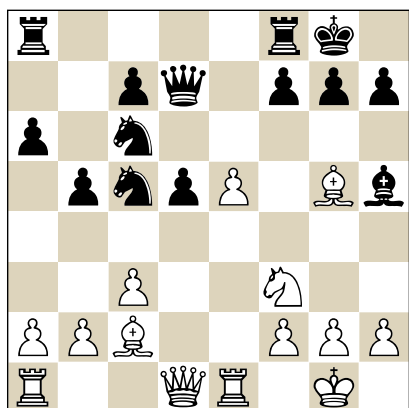
15. ♗g5

Karpov played the modest 15.h3, and the game ended in a draw after 15... ♖e8 16. ♗f4 ♖e6 17. ♗d2 ♖c5 18. ♗f4 ♖e6 19. ♗d2.

15... ♖d7

15... ♗xf3 16. ♖xf3 ♖xg5 17. ♖xd5 was known to slightly favour White

since the game Bronstein-Flohr, Moscow 1944.



16. ♖e3

The old analysis went 16... ♖e6? 17. ♖xh7+! ♔xh7 18. ♘g5+ ♔g6 19. ♔d3+, winning. Larsen had given this line in the booklet, but later discovered an improvement for Black:

16... ♖a4

The above tactical operation does not work now, because Black would have the defence 19... ♔f5 at the end. Since the b2- and e5-pawns are hanging, Larsen considered the position to be quite OK for Black.

In fact, things are less simple and White can keep an advantage.

17. ♔d3 ♘g6

17...g6 maintains the pressure against both pawns, but after 18. ♘h6 the king is exposed and the h5-bishop may get into danger if it is not exchanged for the f3-knight soon. White's main threat is ♔e3-f4, whereas the b2-pawn is not too important.

18. ♔d2

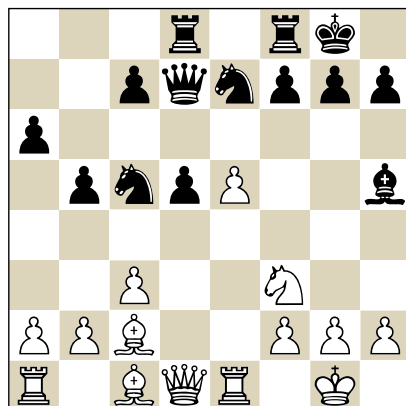
White has parried the immediate threats and Black has problems finding a good reply to the planned b2-b3.

What we see here is the reverse of the lines after the 21st move in the Santa Monica game. Larsen managed to make the position playable from a tactical point of view, but strategically speaking he failed to sense the dangers.

What Kortchnoi had planned against 15. ♘g5 remains an open question, but the lesson to be learned from Larsen's comment is that Black has to choose the retreat squares for his knight with

care, taking into account the permanent danger of a sacrifice on h7.

The main contours of the prophecy came true nine years later, when Kortchnoi himself played two games illustrating both sides of the issue.

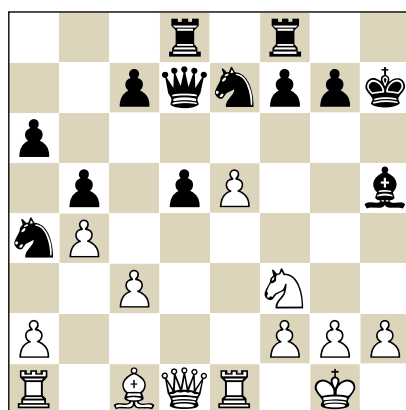


Hübner-Kortchnoi

Tilburg Interpolis 1987 (3)
position after 16... ♖xe7

This tabiya, arising from the 9... ♖c5 variation but featuring the same material balance as in Larsen's line, enjoyed a period of popularity, mainly because of Kortchnoi's effort. Previously, Hjartarson had tried 17. ♖e3 against him, but found himself struggling after 17... ♖a4. When the next move was played, Kortchnoi failed to notice the difference.

17.b4 ♖a4? 18. ♖xh7+ ♔xh7

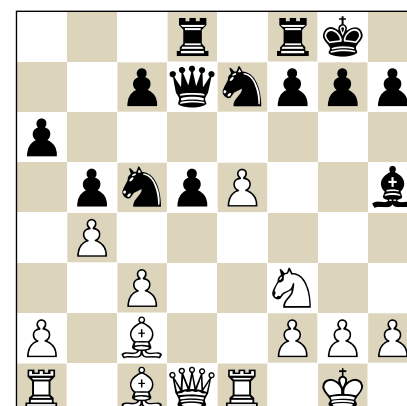


19.e6

and Black resigned!! 19...fxe6 is obviously bad because of 20. ♘g5+ ♔g6 21.g4, but the real point is that the third rank is not blocked: 19... ♖xf3 20. ♔d3+ ♖e4 21. ♔h3+!, winning the queen. The elements that made this combination possible are closely related to Keres's description: the

black knight has problems finding a good square, while the e-pawn is a real killer.

Two rounds later, Kortchnoi used a similar algorithm to Larsen's to rehabilitate the variation.



A.Sokolov-Kortchnoi

Tilburg Interpolis 1987 (5)
position after 17.b4

17... ♖e4!

Simply preventing the sacrifice.

18. ♖xe4 dxe4 19. ♔xd7 ♖xd7 20. ♘g5 ♘g6 21.e6 ♔d3 22.exf7+ ♖xf7 23. ♖xe4 ♖d5

Black has excellent compensation for the pawn and went on to win an instructive rook ending.

I cannot conclude without mentioning a small detail of a linguistic nature. I have in my library several translations of Larsen's *50 Selected Games* (in English, Spanish and Russian), which has facilitated my understanding of all the nuances of the text. On the Baguio match, however, I only had the Dutch edition. As a teenager I had quite good German and combined with more careful reading, this proved enough to understand about 75 per cent of the Dutch text, which is more or less equivalent to the pure chess content. Shortly before writing this article, a friend lent me the English version for a few days, and I soon realized the significance of the missing 25 per cent. Together with his love for and deep knowledge of chess, it is the refined humour of this outstanding player and highly cultured person that makes his comments so unique. ■

Kazan

PHOTOS RASHIT SHIRIYAZDANOV

Close race in Kazan

The fourth leg of the FIDE Women Grand Prix in Kazan, the capital of the Russian Republic of Tatarstan, ended in a shared win for the only two players that remained undefeated, Humpy Koneru from India and Anna Muzychuk from Slovenia. In the overall GP standings World Champion Hou Yifan is in the lead, ahead of Muzychuk. With two tournaments to go the Chinese top-seed, who finished shared third in Kazan, remains the clear favourite, although several players can continue to cherish hope. Among them are Koneru and Muzychuk, who annotated their best efforts from the 4th GP for us.



NOTES BY
Humpy Koneru

EO 15.13 – A25
Kateryna Lahno
Humpy Koneru
Kazan 2012 (9)

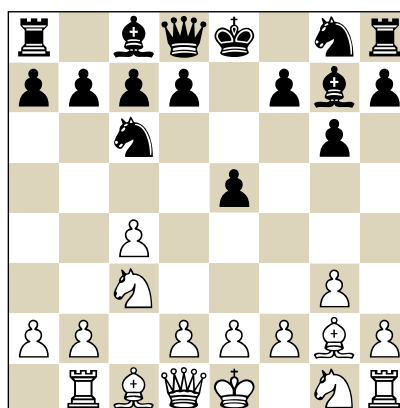
After the Gibraltar tournament I took a break for four months. I felt playing in the Women's World Rapid and Blitz in Batumi just before the Grand Prix in Kazan was like a warm-up.

In the first seven rounds of the Grand Prix, I made six draws and won one game, against the tail-ender of the event. After so many draws my win in Round 8 against Antoaneta Stefanova felt like rain in mid-summer.

After the rest day I played against Lahno Kateryna. This was a crucial

victory to catch the early leader, Elina Danielian.

1.c4 e5 2.g3 ♘c6 3.♘c3 g6 4. ♙g2 ♙g7 5.♖b1



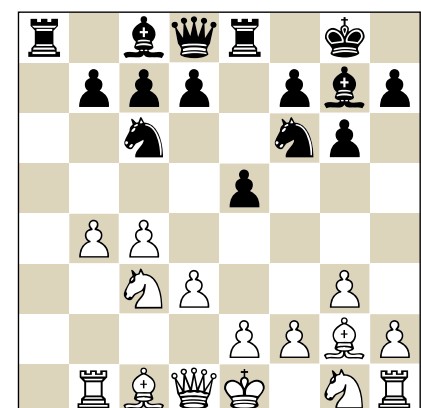
Rather than going for the regular d3, ♘f3 kind of positions, White opts for an early queenside roll.

5...a5 6.a3 ♘f6 7.b4

7.d3 0-0 8.♘f3 d6 9.0-0 h6 10.b4 would lead to the main lines.

7...axb4 8.axb4 0-0 9.d3 ♖e8

The plan behind this move is to threaten ...e4 against White's ♘f3.



10.b5

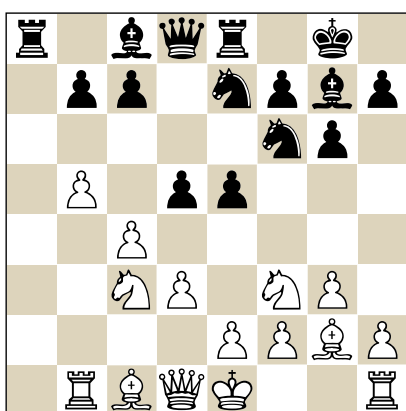
I think 10. ♙g5 is an interesting alternative, e.g. 10...h6 11. ♙xf6 ♙xf6 12. ♘f3 ♙g7 13.0-0 d6 14.b5 ♘e7 15.♘d2 e4 16. ♖c2 e3 17.fxe3 ♘f5, which ultimately led to a draw in Schaller-Heinemann, Gladenbach 1997.

10...♖e7 11.♗f3

I didn't like this move and would have preferred 11.e4, keeping the centre under control, e.g. 11...d6 12.♗ge2 ♕e6 13.0-0 c6, with equality.

11...d5

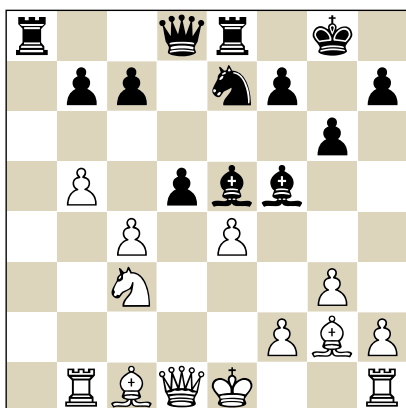
This I played instantly. To be honest, I didn't calculate what would happen after 12.♗xe5, assuming that this position should do well for Black.



12.cxd5?

Kateryna spent more than 30 minutes on this move. Meanwhile I started to go deeper into the position and actually found that 12.♗xe5 is an interesting try.

Let's have a look: 12.♗xe5!? ♗g4 13.d4! (13.f4 ♗xe5 14.fxe5 ♕xe5 15.d4 ♕g7 16.cxd5 ♗f5 is excellent for Black) 13... ♗xe5 14.dxe5 ♕f5 15.e4 ♕xe5:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Now 16.♗xd5 ♗xd5 17.cxd5 ♕c3+ 18.♕d2 ♕xe4 19.0-0 ♕xg2 20.♕xc3 ♕xf1 21.♗xf1 ♕e4 is clearly better for Black.

After 16.0-0! at least White is not worse: 16...dxe4 17.♗xe4 ♗xd1 18.♗xd1 ♗a4 19.♕b2 ♕xb2 20.♗xb2 ♗g7 21.♗c5 ♗xc4 22.♗xb7 ♗c8, with equal chances.



FIDE president Kirsan Ilyumzhinov presented Anna Muzychuk and Humpy Koneru with their winners trophies.

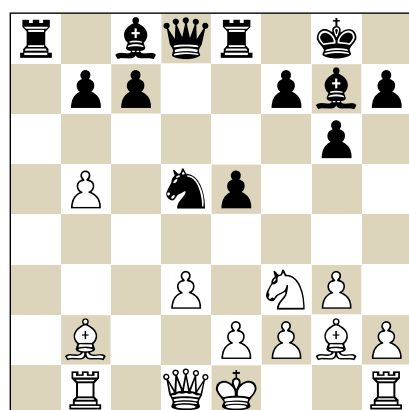
12...♗exd5 13.♗xd5

13.♕b2 doesn't change the fate of the position. After 13...♗xc3 14.♕xc3 ♗d5 15.♕b2 e4 we have transposed to the game.

13...♗xd5

Black has taken the initiative. The only question is in which way White is going to surrender?

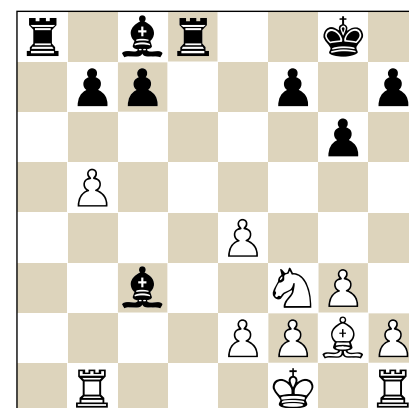
14.♕b2 14.♗c2 is also met by 14...e4 15.dxe4 ♗c3, with a black advantage.



14...e4! 15.dxe4 ♗c3 16.♗xd8

Black is much better after 16.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 17.♗f1 ♗xd1+ 18.♗xd1 ♗xe4 19.h4 ♗b4.

16...♗xd8 17.♕xc3 ♕xc3+ 18.♗f1



18...♗a2!

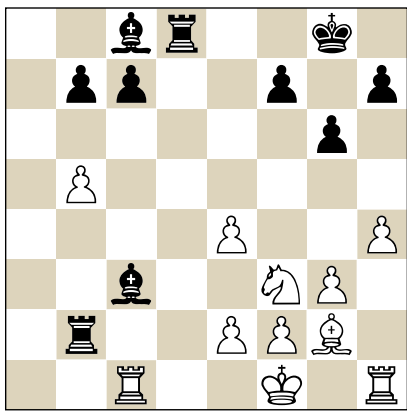
Due to my opponent's inaccuracies I have managed to build up an edge without much effort. My two bishops and rooks are doing their jobs perfectly, whereas White is having several problems: the pawn on b5 is weak, the king has to be secured and of course the rook on h1 is yet to wake up.

19.h4 An obvious move to make space for the king.

Clearly worse was 19.♗c1 ♗c2 20.♗b1 ♗b2 21.♗c1 ♗xb5.

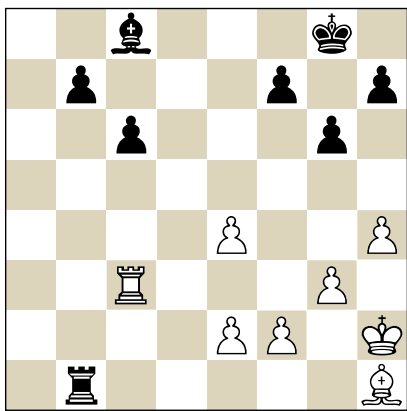
19...♗b2 20.♗c1

A critical moment in the game. Now the time has come to take a decision: whether to capture the b5-pawn or to maintain the pressure on the 7th (or 2nd, if you will) rank.



20...Rxc2!

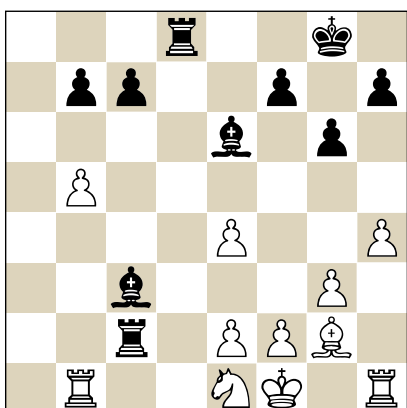
At first I intended to take the pawn on b5, but then I thought this would release the tension in White's position: 20...Rxb5 21.Rxc3 Rb1+ 22.Ne1 Rdd1 23.Qg1 Rxe1+ 24.Qh2 Rxb1+ 25.Qxh1 c6.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

I considered this position as playable for White, even though I have two connected passed pawns on the queenside. It would not be easy to roll them, for instance 26.f4 f6 27.Qf3 Qf7 28.g4 h6 29.Qg3 Qe7 30.Rc3 g5 31.e5 gxf4+ 32.Qxf4 Rb4+ 33.Rc4 fxe5+ 34.Qxe5, and Black has achieved nothing.

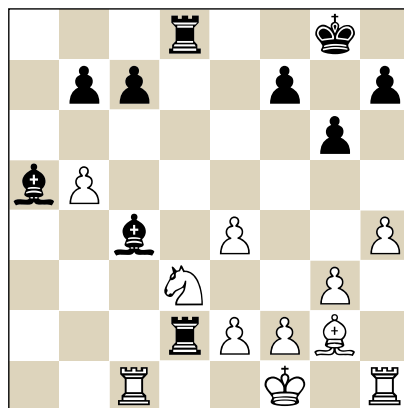
21.Rb1 Qe6 22.Ne1



22...Rcd2

The tricky 22...Rb2 doesn't work here, as after 23.Rxb2 Rd1 I was disappointed seeing 24.Qf3 (imagine this position with the pawn on h2, when White would be lost due to 24...Qh3+) 24...Rxe1+ 25.Qg2 Rxb1 26.Rc2, which leads to equality.

23.Rc1 Qa5 24.Nd3 Qc4



Threatening 25...Qxd3 26.exd3 Qb6.

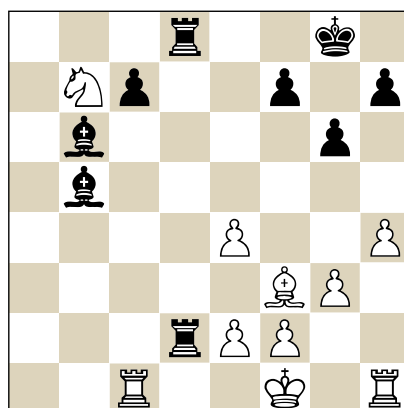
25.Qf3 Qxb5

During the game I was not at all interested in playing with opposite-coloured bishops: 25...Qxd3 26.exd3 Qb6 27.Qe2 Ra8 28.f4 Raa2 29.Rh2 Rdb2, although this position clearly favours Black, too.

26.Nc5

I wanted to hold on to the bishop pair at the cost of a pawn.

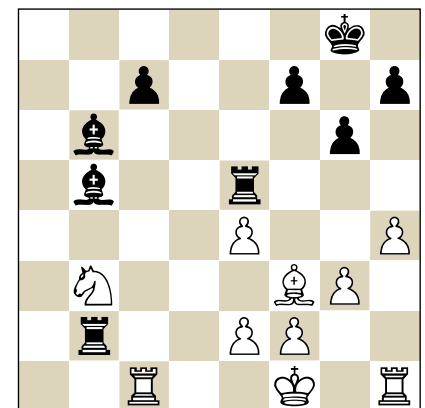
26...Qb6 27.Nxb7



27...Re8

After 27...Re8 Black wins a pawn in all variations: 28.Qg2 Qxe2 29.Qxe2 Rxe2 30.Nc5 Ra5 31.Nd3 Rxe4, or 28.Nc5 Raa2 29.Qg2 Rdc2 30.Rxc2 Rxc2 31.Nb3 Qxe2 32.Qxe2 Rxe2 33.Rf1 Rxe4. However, my plan is to place the rook on e5 and to start rolling the passed c-pawn.

28.Nc5 Re5 29.Nb3 Rb2

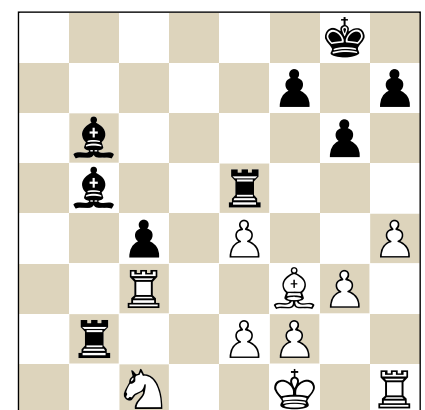


The knight doesn't have proper squares.

30.Rc3

As 30.Na1 runs into 30...f5 31.exf5 Rxf5 32.Qg2 Qxe2 33.Qxe2 Rxf2+, and Black should be winning.

30...c5 31.Nc1 c4



32.Qg2?

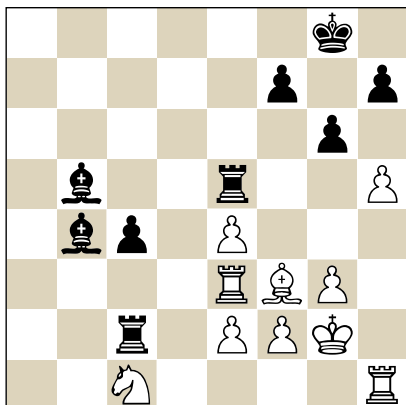
A serious mistake. After this White cannot avoid losing material.

She should have played 32.Ra3 Qc5 33.Ra8+ Re8 34.Ra5 h5 35.Qg2 c3 36.Rd1 Rc8, although here, too, she would be in for a hard time.

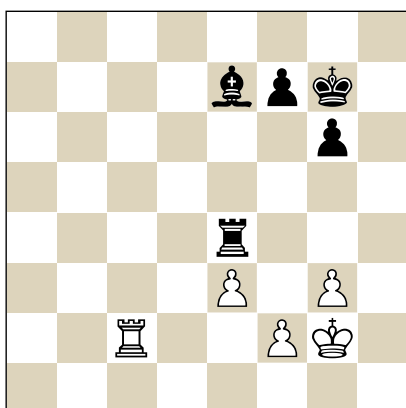
32...Qc5!

White's pieces are stuck. The rook on c3 and the knight don't have any elbow room.

33.h5 ♖b4 34.♗e3 ♜c2



35.♗b3 cxb3 36.♜xb3 ♖e7 37. hxg6 hxg6 38.e3 ♔g7 39.♜hb1 ♘c6 40.♜3b2 ♜xb2 41.♜xb2 ♘xe4 42.♘xe4 ♜xe4 43.♜c2



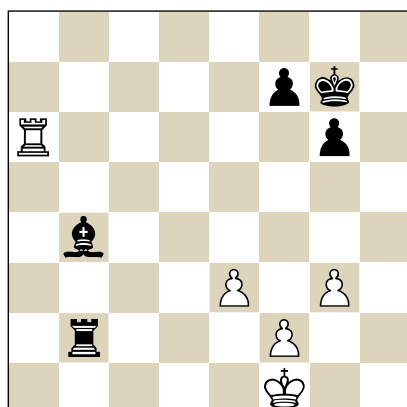
It is clear that Black has material enough for a win, but must still find a plan to break White's structure.

43...♜b4 44.♗f1 ♘f6 45.♗g2 ♜b2 46.♜c4 ♘e7

Intending to place the bishop on e1, attacking the base of the pawn structure.

47.♗f1 ♘d6 48.♜c6 ♘b4 49.♜a6

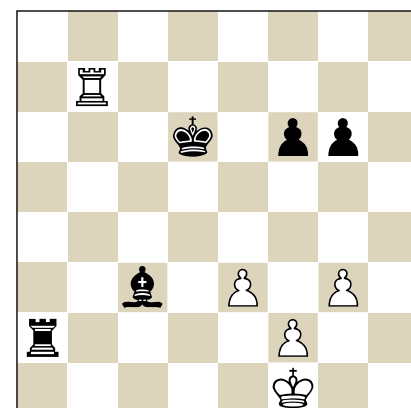
I decided not to commit my pawns too early, as pawn exchanges might give White chances to hold. Now I am trying to get the king to the centre. I wanted to try all other plans before moving my pawns.



49...♜d2 50.♜b6 ♘c3 51.♜c6 ♘e5 52.♜a6 ♜d6 53.♜a7 ♔f6 54. ♜b7 ♜a6 55.♗g2 ♔e6 56.♜b4 ♘c3 57.♜c4 ♘e5 58.♜b4 ♔f5 59.♜b5 ♜a2 60.♗f3 ♔e6 61.♗g2 ♘c3

A quicker way to win was 61...♜b2 62. ♜c5 f5 63.♗f1 g5 64.♗g2 g4 65.♗f1 ♘d6 66.♜a5 ♜c2 67.♗g2 ♘c5 68. ♜a6+ ♔d5 69.♜f6 ♔e5 70.♜c6 ♔e4 71.♜a6 ♘b4 72.♜a4 ♜b2.

62.♗f1 ♘d6 63.♜b7 f6

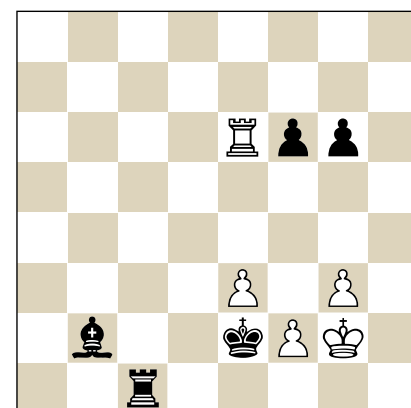


The white king cannot move, as it needs to stop ...♘e1.

64.♜b3

After 64.g4 (with the idea of g5) 64... g5 the black king marches towards the f2-pawn.

64...♜c2 65.♜b5 ♔c6 66.♜b8 ♔d5 67.♜c8 ♔e4 68.♗g2 ♔d3 69.♗f1 ♜c1+ 70.♗g2 ♔e2 71. ♜c6 ♘b2 72.♜e6



72...♜c2 Simplest was 72...♜f1.



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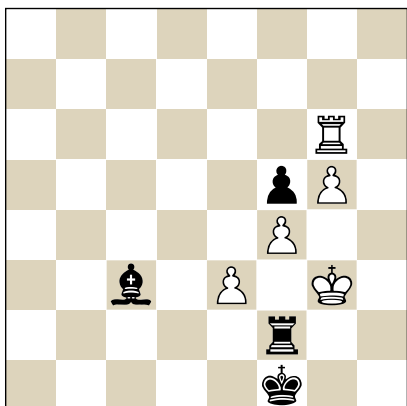
73.f4 ♖e1+ 74.♗f3 ♖f1 75.g4 ♜f2+ 76.♗g3

Or 76.♗e4 ♜e2 77.g5 f5+ 78.♗d5 ♜d2+ 79.♗c6 ♗f2, and wins.

76...♞c3

We were approaching the final time-control with a minute each left on our clocks.

77.g5 f5 78.♞xg6



78...♞g2+

Instead, 78...♞e1!! leads to a mating net: 79.♞f6 ♞g2+ 80.♗h3 ♞g4 81.♞h6 (81.♞xf5 runs into 81...♞h4 mate) 81...♞g1 82.♗h2 ♞g2+ 83.♗h3 ♗g1 84.♞h7 ♞h2 mate.

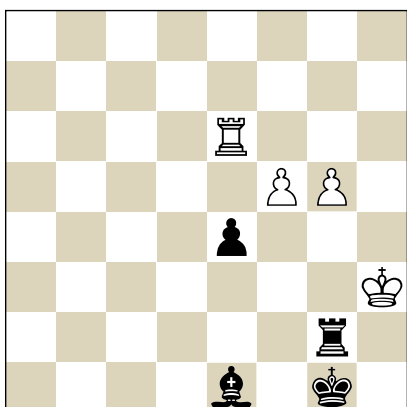
79.♗h3 ♗g1

With the idea of 80...♞h2+ 81.♗g3 ♞e1+ 82.♗f3 ♞f2+ 83.♗g3 ♞f1+ 84.♗h3 ♞f3 mate, or the direct 80...♞e1, threatening 81...♞h2 mate.

79...♞g1 also leads to a mating net: 80.♗h2 ♞e1 81.e4 ♞g3+ 82.♗h3 ♗f2 83.exf5 ♞h1+ 84.♗g4 ♞h4 mate.

80.e4 fxe4 81.♞e6 ♞e1 82.f5

82.♞xe4 loses to 82...♞g3+ 83.♗h4 ♞e3+, and 82.♞e8 is met by 82...♞f2, and wins.



82...♞h2+

And as 83.♗g4 is now met by 83...♞h4 mate, White resigned.



NOTES BY

Anna Muzychuk

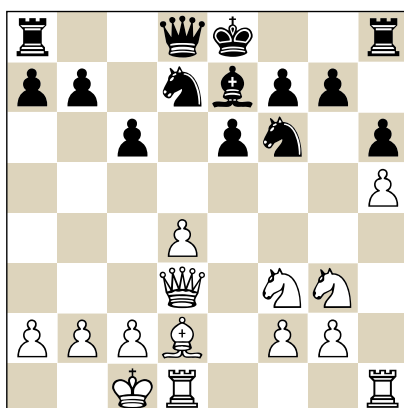
CK 12.3 – B19

Anna Muzychuk

Antoaneta Stefanova

Kazan 2012 (2)

1.e4 c6 2.d4 d5 3.♞c3 dxe4 4.♞xe4 ♞f5 5.♞g3 ♞g6 6.h4 h6 7.♞f3 ♞d7 8.h5 ♞h7 9.♞d3 ♞xd3 10.♞xd3 e6 11.♞d2 ♞gf6 12.0-0 ♞e7



13.♗b1 Antoaneta had never faced the move 13.♗b1, but this line of the Caro-Kann has many transpositions.

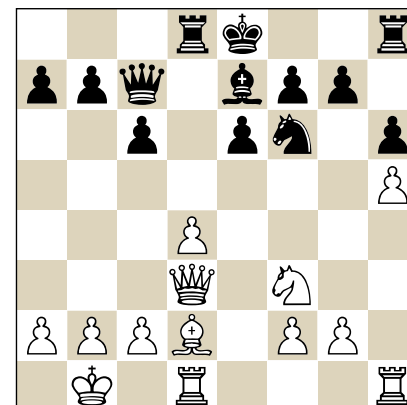
13...♞c7

Usually Black plays 13...0-0. The text-move, 13...♞c7, is a rare continuation, especially followed by 14...♞d8, but this was what I had expected, as after 13.♞e4 Stefanova played a game in which she carried out the same plan.

14.♞e4 This position could also arise from the move order 13.♞e4 ♞c7 14.♗b1. In the aforementioned

game of Antoaneta, White played 14.♞xf6+ instead of 14.♗b1. So basically the current position was a bit new for both of us, as I did not have any games in this line either.

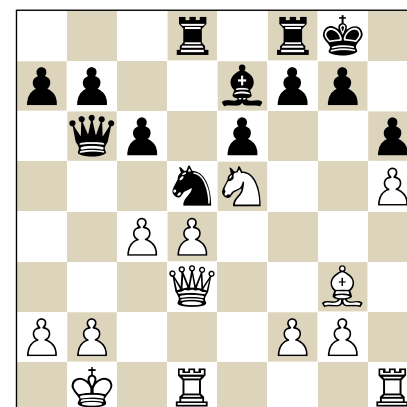
14...♞d8 15.♞xf6+ ♞xf6



16.♞e5

16.♞e2 is another interesting possibility, played by strong players as Vallejo, Xie Jun and Hou Yifan. It surely deserves attention and is probably even stronger than the move I played. The idea of 16.♞e5 is that Black cannot play 16...c5 now in view of 17.♞b5+.

16...0-0 17.♞f4 ♞d5 18.♞g3 ♞b6 19.c4



Kazan 2012

				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12		TPR	
1	Humpy Koneru	IGM	IND	2589	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	½	1	1	7½	2651
2	Anna Muzychuk	IGM	SLO	2598	½	*	½	½	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	1	7½	2651
3	Victoria Cmilyte	IGM	LTU	2508	½	½	*	1	0	½	½	½	½	1	1	1	7	2620
4	Hou Yifan	IGM	CHN	2623	½	½	0	*	1	1	1	½	1	½	1	0	7	2620
5	Alexandra Kosteniuk	IGM	RUS	2457	½	½	1	0	*	1	½	0	½	0	1	1	6	2553
6	Elina Danielian	IGM	ARM	2484	½	½	½	0	0	*	1	1	½	1	0	1	6	2553
7	Tatiana Kosintseva	IGM	RUS	2532	½	½	½	0	½	0	*	1	½	½	½	1	5½	2517
8	Kateryna Lahno	IGM	UKR	2546	0	½	½	½	1	0	0	*	½	½	1	½	5	2481
9	Antoaneta Stefanova	IGM	BUL	2518	0	0	½	0	½	½	½	½	*	1	½	½	4½	2452
10	Nadezhda Kosintseva	IGM	RUS	2528	½	0	0	½	1	0	½	½	0	*	1	½	4½	2452
11	Alisa Galliamova	IM	RUS	2484	0	0	0	0	0	1	½	0	½	0	*	1	3	2342
12	Betul Cemre Yildiz	WGM	TUR	2333	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	½	½	½	0	*	2½	2306

19...♘b4?

A novelty, which was found over the board. Still, it looks as if the knight goes into the wrong direction. The correct move is 19...♞f6.

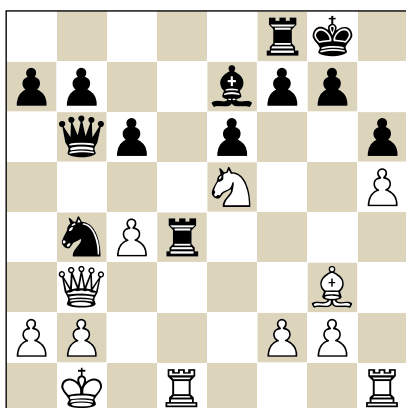
20.♞b3?!

Objectively speaking, 20.♞f3 is a better move, but during the game I wanted to defend the a2-pawn, which may be hanging in some lines.

Weak is 20.♞e4?, when after 20...c5 21.dxc5 ♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♜d8! Black equalizes.

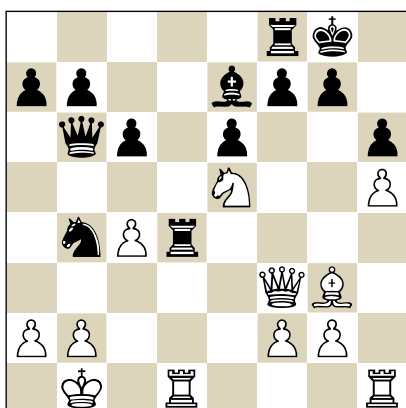
20...♖xd4

After 20...c5 White gets a slightly better endgame with comfortable and easy play: 21.a3 ♘d5 22.♞xb6 ♘xb6 23.dxc5 ♙xc5 24.♙c2.



21.♘d7

I was very surprised when I saw 21.♞f3! suggested by the engine. Analysis shows that White is better in all lines. Still, losing a tempo, while giving a pawn – this idea did not even cross my mind.



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

Play might continue 21...♖fd8 (White is also slightly better after 21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♞c5 23.a3 ♘a6 24.♘d7 ♞xc4 25.♘xf8 ♙xf8 26.♙e5)



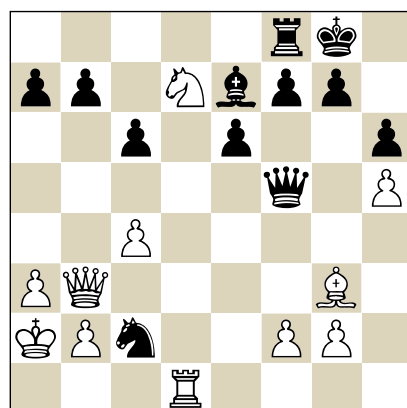
22.♞xf7+ ♙h8 (22...♙h7 23.♞g6+)
23.♞f3 ♙h7 24.♞e2, with a white edge.

21...♖xd1+ 22.♖xd1 ♞a5 23.a3

23.♘xf8 leads to a draw by perpetual check: 23...♞f5+ 24.♙c1 ♙g5+ 25.f4 ♙xf4+ 26.♙xf4 ♞xf4+ 27.♖d2 ♞f1+ 28.♖d1 ♞f4+.

23...♞f5+ 24.♙c1 ♙g5+ 25.♙a2

Here I was very satisfied with my position, which I had seen when playing 20.♞b3. White has excellent compensation for the sacrificed pawn: Black's rook and the b7-pawn are hanging, and the knight on c2 also seems to be in danger. I thought that the position was already much better for me, but I was wrong. If Black had played 25...♞e8 now, the result would not have been a foregone conclusion.

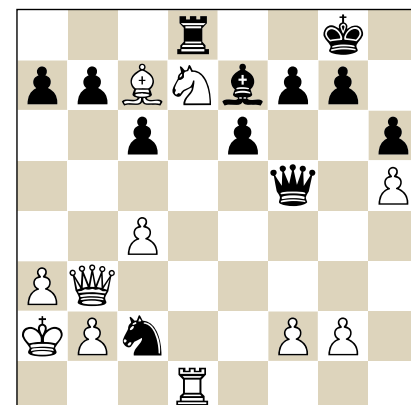


25...♖d8?

Probably the decisive mistake. As said, she should have played 25...♞e8!. The difference compared to the game is that the bishop stays on g3 (and does not go to c7) and now, after f3, White does not threaten g4. For instance, 26.♞xb7 ♘xa3 27.♘e5 (27.bxa3? ♞c2+) 27...♘c2 28.♘xc6 ♙g5 29.♞d7 ♞a8, and White is probably better after 30.♙b3. But it would be quite difficult to make such a move in a tournament game.

26.♙c7

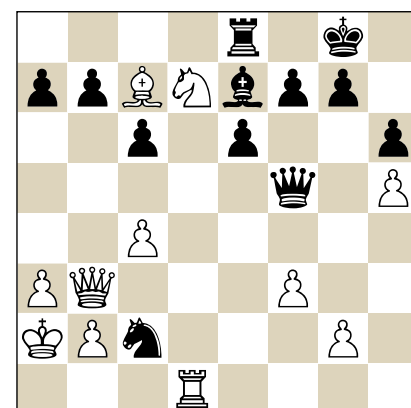
Now White gets a large advantage, as Black doesn't have enough time to coordinate her pieces.



26...♞e8

Maybe 26...♖c8 would have been a better practical choice: 27.♞xb7 ♞e8 (before playing 26.♘c7 I could not find the refutation of 27...♖xc7 for some time, until I finally saw that the queen returns to b3 and White is winning: 28.♞xc7 ♞g4 29.♞b8+ ♙h7 30.♖d2 ♞xc4+ 31.♞b3; 27...♞g4 does not work either: 28.♞xc8+ ♙h7 29.♘f8+ ♙xf8 30.♞d8 ♞xc4+ 31.b3, followed by 32.♞d3+, exchanging the queens) 28.♞xc6 ♞xf2 29.♙d6!, and White is winning.

27.f3



Now it is difficult for Black to complicate the game. If she doesn't want to put the queen on h7, she will have to sacrifice a piece.

27...♙g5

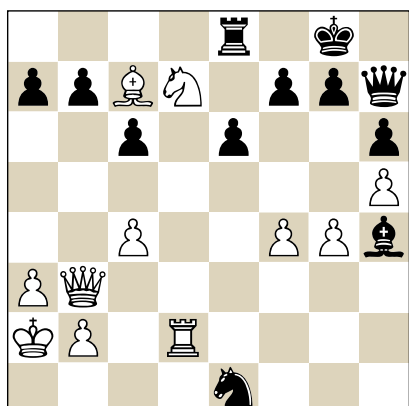
Also losing are 27...b5 28.cxb5 ♘xa3 29.bxc6 and 27...♘xa3 28.bxa3 ♞xh5 29.♞xb7.

28.g4 ♞h7 29.f4

29.♘e5 was also a good option,

putting the knight in the centre and preparing ♖d7.

29...♗h4 30.♖d2 ♘e1



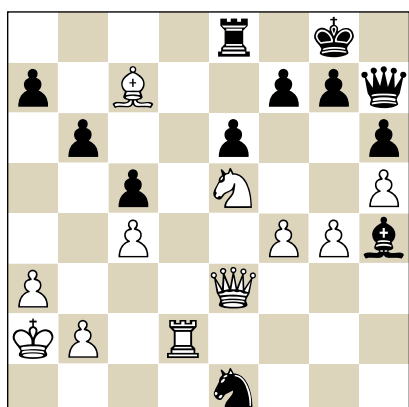
31.♗e3

The idea of this move is to centralize the queen and defend the e4-square, as Black wanted to play ...♗e4.

But even stronger was 31.f5! exf5 32.♗xb7 fxg4 33.♖e2, and wins.

31.♗xb7? was bad in view of 31...♘f3.

31...b6 32.♘e5 c5



33.♗e2!

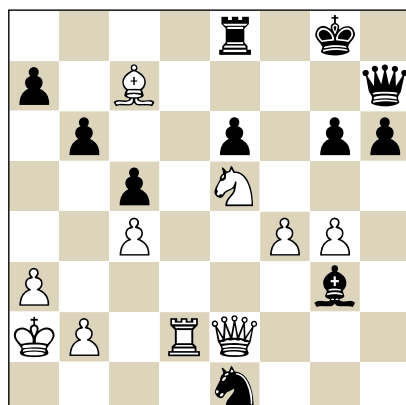
There were different possibilities to win a piece immediately, but then I would have to put the queen or a rook on h4, where they would be 'out of play'. This would give Black time to organize some counterplay: 33.♖h2 ♘c2 34.♗b3! (going for the bishop with 34.♗c3? is not good, as in a few moves I would face problems with my own bishop: 34...♘d4 35.♖xh4 ♖c8 36.♗d6 ♖d8, and there is no escape and Black saves the draw) 34...♘d4 35.♗a4 b5 36.cxb5 ♗e4 37.♖xh4, which looks like winning for White, but with some complications.

Clearly bad was 33.♗h3? ♗e4 34.♗xh4 f6, and White has achieved nothing.

33...♗g3 34.♘c6

Also strong was 34.f5!? ♗xe5 35. ♗xe5 exf5 36.♗g3!, and wins.

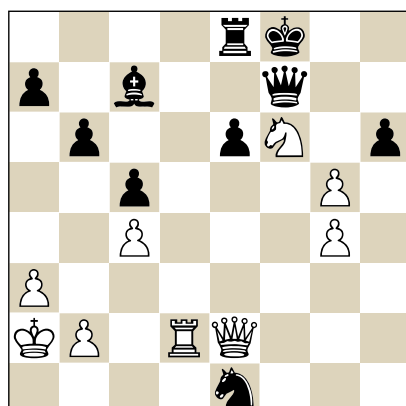
34...g5 35.hxg6 fxg6 36.♘e5



36...g5

Black cannot take the bishop, 36...♗xc7, because of 37.♖d7 with 38.♗e4 and mate.

37.♘d7 ♗f7 38.fxg5 ♗xc7 39. ♘f6+ ♗f8



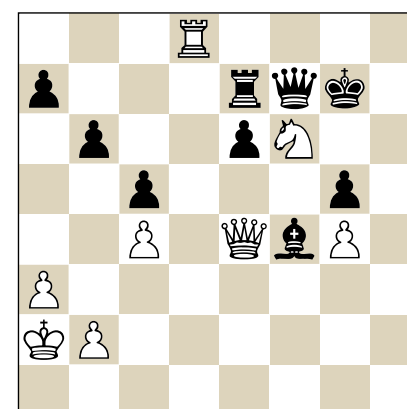
40.♗xe1

Much more precise was 40.♘xe8 ♘f3 41.♘xc7 ♘xd2 42.♘xe6+, but pressed by time-trouble I took the wrong piece.

40...♗f4

This loses outright. More stubborn was 40...♖d8. Initially I thought that 41.♖f2 was winning, but then Black has the trick 41...♗g3!, when after 42.♘h7+ she can simply play 42...♗g8 and the position is no longer that clear. This is why White should play 41.♖e2, maintaining a huge advantage.

41.♖d7 ♖e7 42.♖d8+ ♗g7 43.♗e4 hxg5



44.♘h5+

Black resigned, as after 44...♗h6 45. ♖h8+ it's all over. ■



With two tournaments to go Anna Muzychuk is second in the overall GP standings.



Occult Mastery

Luke McShane



Andrew Soltis's *What it Takes to Become a Chess Master* has, as chess books go, an intriguing title. In a subtle way, it promises rather a lot. Just what might we expect to find inside? A sort of 'Novice to Pro in 24 hours', perhaps? Nothing of the sort – this is a book aimed at experienced players keen to take the next step. Nor is it a book suggesting that masters have some distinctive attitude to the game which differentiates them from other players. There is no special sauce for chess expertise. If anything, it's more like compost – a collection of fertile concepts which will matter in the long term.

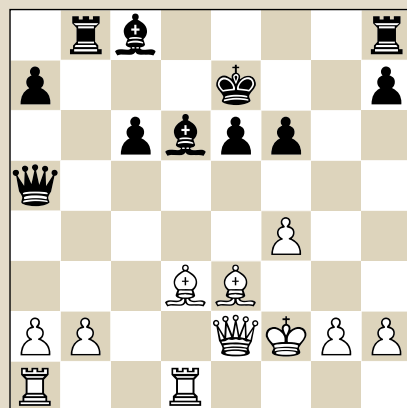
I really like the book, and although it is not directly comparable, in some ways it reminded me of one I found useful some time ago – John Nunn's *Secrets of Practical Chess*, which stood out for its collection of well-illustrated themes, often bringing to my attention new ideas or ways of looking at the game. For example, one lesson that sticks in my mind is the idea that a player launching into an attack might gain confidence if there is a perpetual check to fall back on. As a much younger player, I had until then assumed that most attacks fell into two categories – brilliancies if they ended in mate, and misguided flailing otherwise. The idea that an attack could be fully justified even if it was not destined to end in victory was an important realization.

Soltis's book divides into nine chapters, each based around a concept which is intended to illustrate a way of thinking about things that might add a little extra to your game. The examples

seem to me very well chosen – here is one from the chapter entitled 'What Matters Most'. To quote Soltis (slightly abridged):

'The biggest difference between you and a master is not his deep opening knowledge. It is not his endgame skill. Or his ability to calculate further. The biggest difference is that he knows what he wants... A master looks at the board and knows what kind of position he'd like to play two or three moves from now. That's hard for non-masters to do because in any position there are so many things to weigh. There is material to count, king safety to evaluate, weak squares to consider, as well as good and bad bishops, outposts for knights, and so on...

'Here's an example:



Adams-Radjabov
Enghien-les-Bains 2003
position after 20...Ke7

'Black has weaknesses all over his side of the board. But it's hard to get at them because he also has targets to attack, at b2 and f2, and he can use the f2-b6 diagonal tactically. For instance, if he is allowed to play 21...Bc5 and 21. Bxc5+ Kxc5+ 23. Qf1 he has 23...Kb4!, attacking the f- and b-pawns. White can avert this with 21. Bc4 and then 21...Bc5 22. Bxc5+

Kxc5+ 23. Qf1. But 23...Kf5 is annoying. It stands to reason that if tactics are the problem White should take steps to eliminate them. He began with the unassuming 21. Qg1! Then came 21...Bc5 22. Bxc5+ Kxc5+ 23. Qh1 White has played three more or less routine moves since the previous diagram. But the position is no longer double-edged. White has a serious edge. What made the difference? Of course, it's the white king. It is now out of checking range. Once the king is no longer a factor, there's something else that matters most, the insecure Black king and pawns.'

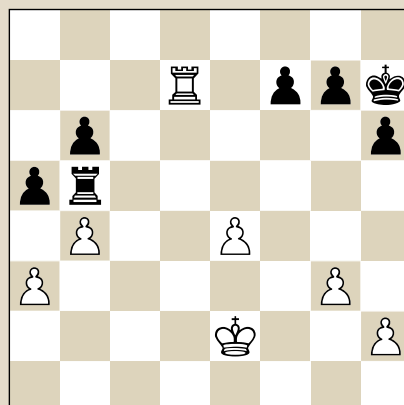
Black resigned just half a dozen moves later. I really like this example, for a couple of reasons. Firstly, it is a great example of the theme of 'what matters most'. In many ways king safety is a more subtle concept than, for example, pawn structures or colour complexes, perhaps because it's more bound up with the question of timing, which indeed involves understanding what matters most in a given position. Secondly, it's the sort of thing that is very difficult to learn from a computer. Mine suggests there are many moves of similar merit in the above diagram, but to my mind the continuation which Mickey chose is clearly the correct one.

The principle of looking for what matters most in a given position is an important one. Apart from Soltis's selection of examples, another which springs to mind can be found in my annotations to my game with Aroian in New In Chess 2012/1, where Jon Speelman's suggested improvement on move 28 homed in on the most important feature of the posi-

tion, while ignoring the conventional wisdom about leaving rooks behind passed pawns.

Soltis is a strong advocate of studying well-annotated master games, and I suspect that annotations such as those that appear in *New In Chess* helped inspire many of his examples. Good notes, as Soltis explains (as opposed to very brief symbolic notes), help to reveal a lot of important subtleties which you might otherwise miss. The difficulty can lie in knowing what to look for in those games, and in many ways that seems to inspire the content in this book – the things which masters take for granted, but which others may struggle to understand. These are ideas to digest and absorb slowly, and in practice will depend on a good knowledge of many other aspects to be used well. For example, the concept of ‘Winnability’ is an important one – an advantage is all very well, but is it big enough to win? Sometimes a position ‘wins itself’, but others require a more active prosecution of the advantage. Another notable point which Soltis makes, is that ‘it is usually easier to win with a substantial *positional* advantage than with an equally substantial *material* advantage.’ Clearly, it’s not feasible to prove the truth of that, but I can

of quiz exercises which highlight the theme under discussion, and here is one from the aforementioned ‘Winnability’ chapter.



Gurevich-Adorjan
Akureyri 1988
position after 36...a5

Soltis asks ‘What move should White consider first? And does it work?’ I fully agree that White should look at 1. ♖d5 first, which forces play into a pawn endgame which may well be winning for White. However, I disagree with Soltis’s implication that the move leads to a win. After **37. ♖d5 ♗xd5 38. exd5 ♕g6?** was a lemon, perhaps played in time-trouble. After **39. bxa5! bxa5 40. ♕d3 ♕f6 41. ♕c4 ♕e7** was forced, as 41... ♕e5 42. ♕c5 wins. Then 41. ♕b5 leads to a win. But it seems to me that 38...axb4! would have saved the draw – the essential difference is that after 39. axb4 ♕g6 40. ♕d3 ♕f6 41. ♕c4 ♕e5 White can’t advance to c5. Instead after 42. ♕b5 ♕xd5 43. ♕xb6 f5! Black promotes just in time.

Still, the majority of quiz questions, like the examples, struck me as well chosen, and often feature useful echoes of the illustrative examples. I also learned of a few novelties such as the concept of ‘priyomes’, which is apparently a Russian word used to describe the technique that is appropriate for a particular pawn structure. Most players will be familiar with examples of these, such as in a Benoni structure, when White plays e4-e5! d6xe5 f4-f5!, but the idea of a general label for such ideas speaks of a particular approach to the game.

On the other hand, the fact that some of the material in this book is ripe for misinterpretation should not count as a criticism. A chapter on ‘Little Tactics’ emphasizes the importance of small tactical operations to achieve short-term strategic goals. It’s a good point, and often under-appreciated, but I also suspect that a certain type of player may start ‘seeing’ little tactics everywhere, when there are none to be had. As with all good ideas, it should be consumed as part of a balanced diet...

Valeri Beim’s new book *The Enigma of Chess Intuition* is a very different type of work, one whose appeal grew on me more gradually than Soltis’s book. The subject, chess intuition, is a fiendish one, which Beim acknowledges right from the start. Like great art, a lot of people would say ‘I know

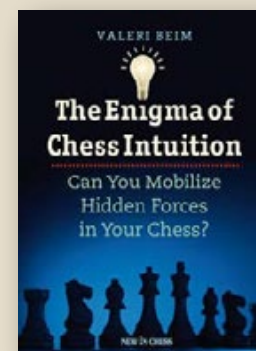
**What It Takes
to Become a
Chess Master**
Andrew Soltis
Batsford, 2012



appreciate the wisdom of it much more keenly than a less experienced version of myself might have done.

Besides the catalogue of well chosen examples, there was the odd occasion where I disagreed with Soltis’s conclusions. Each chapter ends with a series

**The Enigma of
Chess Intuition**
Valeri Beim
New In Chess, 2012



it when I see it’, but what really underpins it? In this book Beim sets himself the task of trying to understand that better, and indeed how we might make use of that (as hinted at by the occultist subtitle ‘Can you Mobilize Hidden Forces in Your Chess?’). Particularly in the opening chapter, this investigation takes on a rhetorical tone at times, and the style can make for heavy reading. It is a bit unfair of me to take these sentences out of context, but let me do so anyway: ‘Whatever the situation, the approach to it begins with a survey of the position. Then, on the basis of that survey, we can draw a conclusion as to the properties of the position.’ You could be forgiven for wondering what that actually means, and it took some per-



Through the Luking Glass

severance to persuade myself that this initially cautious investigation was going somewhere.

Let me first point out that whether or not you agree with Beim's ideas about chess intuition, there is a lot to enjoy in this book. The meat of the book sees Beim examining his ideas by looking at a great number of top level games. Many of the games (by the way, a pleasing blend of old and new) were familiar to some extent, but the emphasis on intuition brings a fresh angle, and Beim is a passionate annotator. A nice example of his honest approach can be found in his comments to the game Spassky-Tal, where he explains why he disagrees with the view of Kasparov and Tal, while acknowledging that their views are the more authoritative. (The positions in question are difficult to evaluate, so reaching a definitive conclusion is not straightforward.)

Moreover, Beim makes some insightful comments along the way. This struck me as a particularly astute observation:

'I suggest that the ability to react well to an opponent's prepared novelty is to a large extent a function of intuition. Why? Because to reply well to a strong prepared novelty often requires a great deal, if not an impossible amount of calculation work. And in addition, it requires correct assessments of very complicated positions, arising at the end of the lines calculated, if the player manages to get that far. In other words, it is a task which is often extremely difficult and virtually impossible to achieve by the "normal" means of calculation and assessment. And then, as we know, the heroine of our book steps forward – intuition.'

In his final section, 'The Elements of Chess Intuition', Beim writes that 'we have only become acquainted with the outward signs of the phenomenon. However, I do not think this is sufficient...' He goes on to try to get at the mechanics of intuition, and takes the view that superior intuition resides in a superior examination of the posi-

tion, which partly helps to make sense of those elliptical lines which I highlighted from the introduction. To a sceptic, that might sound hardly more informative, but it leads on to the interesting conclusion that good intuition consists in an accurate examination of the position, which is intertwined with the calculation of short-range tactics. In many ways, that is a surprising conclusion to reach. Intuition is so closely related to 'feel' and 'judgement' (indeed, the words are sometimes used interchangeably), that to claim an intimate connection with tactics is initially surprising. Nevertheless, Beim's argument is carefully considered and persuasive, I felt, although it is difficult to do it justice by summarizing it. He neatly points out that Kramnik, commenting on Smyslov's qualities as a player (and implicitly, an intuitive one), wrote that:

'He possesses a filigree accuracy and his ideas come into being "millimetre by millimetre". To some extent, Smyslov was the creator of that style, which was then developed brilliantly by Karpov: a gradual increase in the positional pressure, based on the calculation of short variations, performed with the accuracy of an apothecary's weights.'

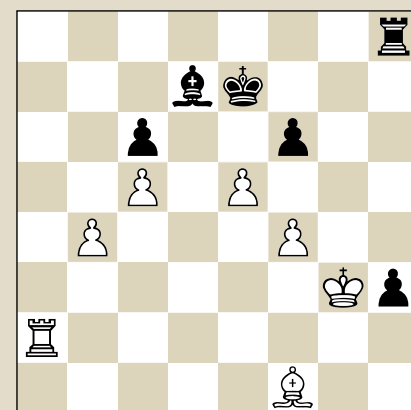
It is not easy to do justice to Beim's ideas in these few short paragraphs, but this book strikes me as an unusually thoughtful one. The subject is difficult and the book takes some time to get into its stride, but Beim has made a great effort to come up with a coherent theory of intuition, and there is plenty to enjoy along the way. Can this book help you to mobilize hidden forces in your chess? Beim returns to this question quite late in the book, and makes the following point:

'Given that our researches in this book have established that the basis of intuition is a complex of examining the position and short-range tactics, the only sensible recommendation, in which I am firmly convinced, is to look at how to train these two abilities.'

This might seem like a bit of an afterthought, but at the same time, a close

study of the games in this book will probably have helped you along the way.

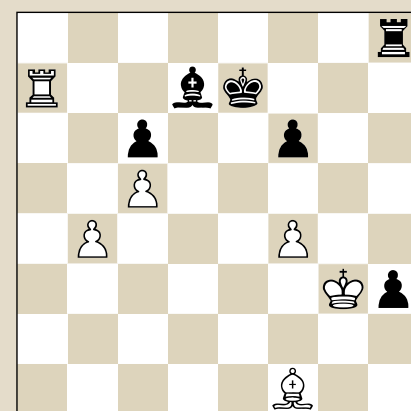
Let me finish with a charming example about which Beim writes: 'I cannot count the number of times I have seen it, but even now, I cannot look at it without a feeling of wonder.' Beim offers some fuller notes than I have here:



Tal-Trifunovic

Palma de Mallorca 1966
position after 44...f6

45.e6!! ♗xe6 We can trust that the bishop or rook endings reached after 45...h2 or 45...♖xe6 are comfortably winning for White. **46.♖a7+ ♗d7**



47.♗h2!! For Beim, what makes this such a powerful intuitive decision from Tal is that he decided to keep calculating in this position – not giving up on the idea of 45.e6!! just because it involves a retreat. Having heard the 'inner voice' to keep looking, the rest fits into place beautifully. **47...♖h5 48.b5! ♖xc5 49.♗h3 f5 50.bxc6 ♖xc6 51.♗xf5 ♖d6 52.♗g3!** and the pawn endgame is easily won: **52...♗e8 53.♖xd7 ♖xd7 54.♗xd7+ ♗xd7 55.♗g4 ♗e6 56.♗g5 ♗f7 57.♗f5** Black resigned. ■



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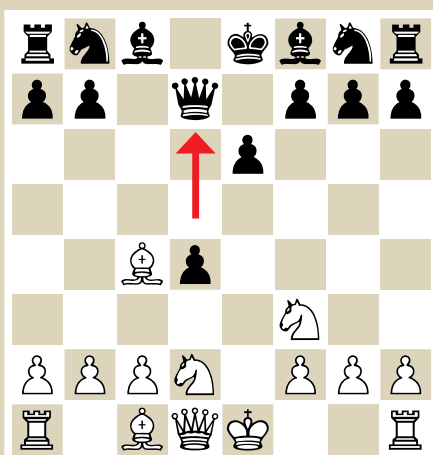


A novel queen retreat



Jeroen Bosch

6... ♔d7!?

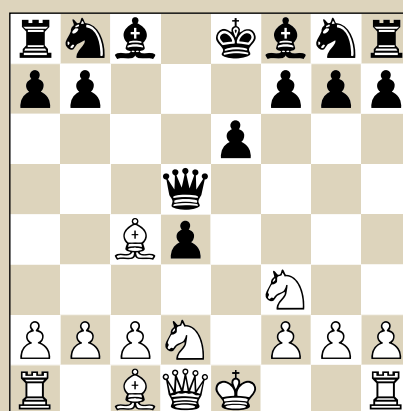


In this SOS column we will examine a popular line of the French Tarrasch in which top grandmasters have recently discovered a novel queen retreat. Our SOS starts as early as move six!

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 c5 4.exd5

Here 4.♘gf3 cxd4 5.exd5 ♔xd5 is the alternative move order.

4... ♔xd5 5.♘gf3 cxd4 6.♙c4



6... ♔d7!?

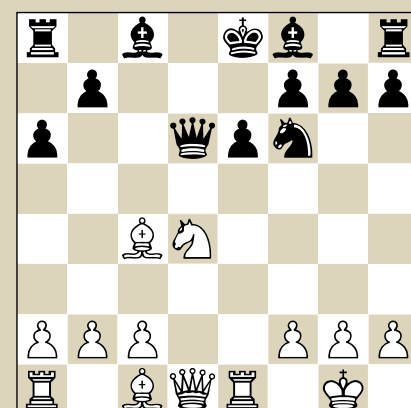
A quite astonishing move in a position in which most players would automatically retreat Her Majesty to square d6. Indeed, you will find well over 5,000 games in your database with 6... ♔d6, whereas the text has been played in only a few dozens of games so far.

There are earlier examples of 6... ♔d7, but I would date the revival January 2011 with the game Movsesian-Vallejo, Reggio Emilia 2010/11. Since that game, players of the stature of Shirov, Ni Hua, and Fridman have given it an occasional outing.

Before we start our investigation, just

a few superficial remarks regarding 6... ♔d6, to reflect on the merits of our SOS move.

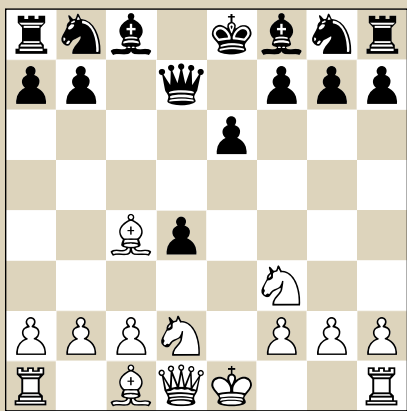
The main line after 6... ♔d6 is 7.0-0 (note that 7.♘b3 ♔b4+! is an argument for placing the queen on d6). An exciting line is 7.♔e2 ♘f6 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.♙g5 a6 10.0-0-0 b5 11.♙d3 ♙e7 – play is more ‘Sicilian’ than ‘French’. White has a lead in development, but Black’s position is sound) 7... ♘f6 8.♘b3 ♘c6 9.♘bxd4 ♘xd4 (with the queen on d7 Black has the additional option of playing 9... ♙c5 here – as, for example, Shirov did – while he can also take on d4 and play ... ♙c5 later) 10.♘xd4 (it is good to know that the endgame after 10.♔xd4 ♔xd4 11.♘xd4 ♙d7 is harmless. We will encounter the same ending below) 10...a6 (this is more popular than 10... ♙d7) 11.♙e1 (11.c3 and 11.♙b3)



11... ♔c7 12.♙b3, and now the tactical main line 12... ♙d6 (12... ♙d7)

13. ♖f5 ♕xh2+ 14. ♖h1 0-0 15. ♗xg7 ♜d8 16. ♜f3 ♖xg7 17. ♕h6+ ♖g6 18. c3 ♗h5 has been analysed down to a draw. For some reason, Black often prefers other lines these days (like 12... ♕d7).

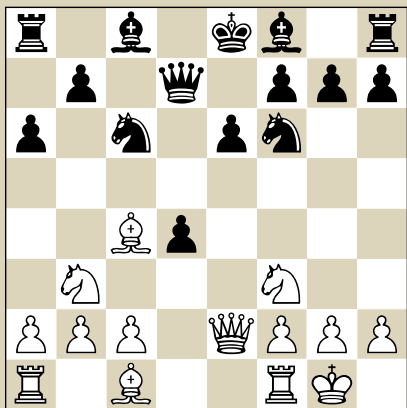
As an afterthought, 6... ♜d8 is not stupid either, but with some 500 games played it could still be called a 'theoretical line'.



7.0-0

The most natural reply. White continues as he would after 6... ♜d6. Nevertheless, it makes sense to look at two alternatives.

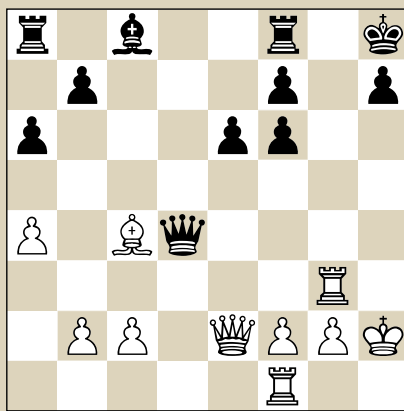
■ 7. ♜e2 ♗c6 8.0-0 ♗f6 9. ♗b3 a6 (this position may also be reached via the move order 7.0-0 ♗c6 8. ♗b3 ♗f6 9. ♜e2 a6)



– 10. ♕g5 b5 11. ♕d3 ♕b7 12. ♜ad1 (or 12. ♕xf6 gxf6 13. ♕e4 ♕e7 14. ♗bxd4 ♗xd4 15. ♗xd4 ♜d8 and the dynamics appear to balance White's slight structural advantage) 12... ♜c7 13. ♗bxd4 ♕e7 14. ♜fe1 ♗xd4 15. ♗xd4 0-0 16. c3 ♜fe8, and Black was fully equal in Kanovsky-Figura, Olomouc 2011.

– 10. a4 ♕d6 11. ♕g5 (11. ♜d1 e5 12.

♗bxd4 ♗xd4 13. ♗xd4 – 13. ♜xd4 ♜e7 14. ♜xd6!? ♜xd6 15. b3 is an interesting exchange sacrifice that should not worry Black unduly – 13... ♜e7 was completely sound for Black in Abergel-Cornette, Caen 2011) 11...0-0 (11... ♜c7 was interesting, according to Adams) 12. ♕xf6 gxf6 13. ♗bxd4 ♗xd4 14. ♗xd4 ♕xh2+ 15. ♖xh2 ♜xd4 16. ♜a3! (an excellent rook lift) 16... ♖h8 17. ♜g3.



We have been following the game Adams-Fridman, Gibraltar 2012. If this looks familiar, then your memory still serves you! The whole game may be found in *New In Chess* 2012/2, p.87 ff, as analysed by Michael Adams. I would just like to repeat his suggestion that 17... ♜f4 (17... ♜h4+ 18. ♜h3 ♜f4+ was the game, when after 19.g3 White's game was to be preferred) 18. ♜h5 ♕d7 19. ♜h1 ♜g8 20. ♖g1 ♜f5 is completely OK for Black. – White could also consider 10. ♜d1 b5 11. ♕d3 ♕b7, which has not been tested in practice. Black is fine after 12. ♗bxd4 ♗xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♕c5 14. ♕e3 (note that the trick 14. ♗xb5? rebounds after 14... ♜c6! 15. ♜f1 ♗g4, and Black has taken over) 14...0-0, although it is important to note that Black will not lose after the tactic 15. ♗xe6!?. Black has 15... ♜xe6 (15... ♜c6) 16. ♕xc5 ♜c6, when after 17. ♜f3 the subtle 17... ♜c7!? is even better than 17... ♜xf3.

■ Another sensible move is 7. ♗b3 (after all, with the queen on d6 Black now has 7... ♜b4+, which clearly isn't the case here) 7... ♗c6 (7... ♜c7 8. ♕b5+ – 8. ♜xd4 ♗c6; 8. ♜e2 ♕b4+ – 8... ♕d7 9. ♕xd7+ ♗xd7 10. ♗bxd4 ♗gf6 11.0-0 ♕c5 12. ♜e2 was drawn in A.Kovacevic-Tratar, Nova Gorica 2012) 8. ♗bxd4

♗xd4 9. ♗xd4 a6 10. ♕f4 (the main line of our SOS arises after 10.0-0 ♗f6) 10... ♕c5 (10... ♗f6) 11. ♗b3 ♜xd1+ 12. ♜xd1 ♕b6, and White had very little in Palac-Tratar, Bol 2011.

7... ♗c6 7... ♗f6 8. ♗b3 ♗c6 amounts to the same thing.

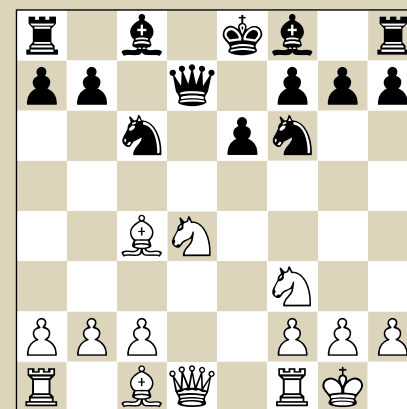
8. ♗b3 ♗f6 9. ♗bxd4

In the stem game, Black equalized quickly after 9. ♕f4 ♕d6! 10. ♕xd6 ♜xd6 11. ♗bxd4 ♗xd4 12. ♜xd4 (12. ♗xd4 0-0 leaves White too few minor pieces, and thus no attacking chances) 12... ♜xd4 13. ♗xd4 ♕d7 14. ♜fd1 ♜c8 15. ♕b3 ♖e7, and a draw was soon agreed in Movsesian-Vallejo, Reggio Emilia 2010/11.

White can circumvent line A by taking with the other knight on d4: 9. ♗fxd4 ♗xd4 10. ♗xd4 a6, but in that case Black might refuse to exchange knights on d4 and just leave White's knight standing rather awkwardly on b3: 9...a6 10. ♜e1 ♕e7.

9. ♜e1 is interesting, but White has to consider 9... ♕b4 in that case.

Please note that 9. ♜e2 a6 transposes to our note on 7. ♜e2.

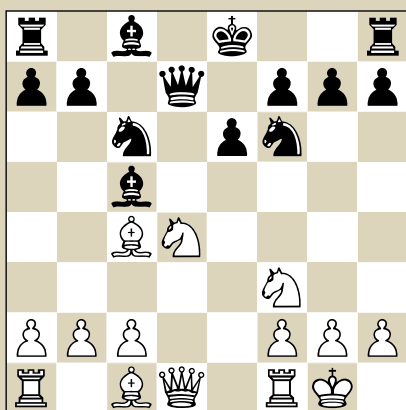


Black is at a crossroads. The purpose of 6... ♜d7 is that it leaves the king's bishop room to go to the active c5 square. Black can profit from his move order with 9... ♕c5 (line A), or with 9... ♗xd4 10. ♗xd4 a6 11. ♜e1 ♕c5 (line B).

Line A

9... ♕c5

This is the most audacious continuation. Black (briefly) grabs the initiative by attacking the knight on d4. White has to respond forcefully, or Black will have an easy game.



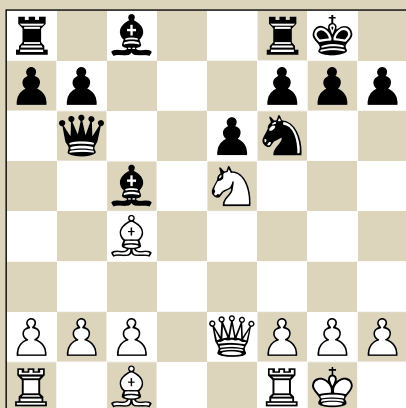
10. ♖xc6 ♗xc6 11. ♖e5

11. ♗e2 0-0 12. ♖e5 ♗e4 (Black takes advantage of White's move order; 12... ♗b6 leads back into the next diagrammed position) 13. ♖e1 ♗xe2 14. ♖xe2 b6 15. ♖g5 h6 16. ♖h4 ♖d8 17. c3 ♖b7, and Black was slightly better in Kevorkov-Luther, Dresden 2011.

11... ♗b6 12. ♗e2

Instead, 12. ♖g5 can be met by 12... 0-0, not fearing 13. ♖xf6 gxf6, as White cannot deploy his rooks. Geske-Luther, Wiesbaden 2011, ended in perpetual check after 14. ♗h5 (14. ♖d3 ♖e7) 14... fxe5 15. ♗g5+ ♖h8 16. ♗f6+, since 16... ♖g8 17. ♖ad1 is met by 17... e4, when White has to settle for a perpetual after all.

12... 0-0



The critical position. Black's pieces are well placed (but so are White's). His main problems are: the development of his queenside and the defence of his king, which has been left somewhat in the lurch by both its queen and its bishop.

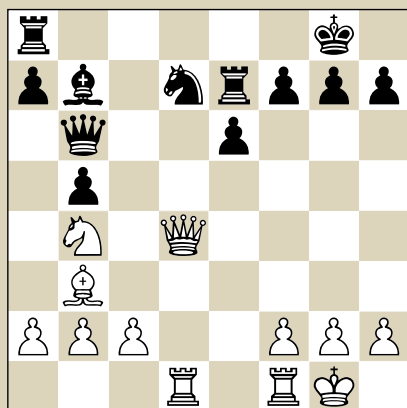
13. ♖d3

White immediately regroupes to set up threats along the b1-h7 diagonal. This is admirably direct play. It is useful to

see Shirov's response to such unveiled aggression.

– 13. ♖d1 has not been played yet, although it makes sense to grab the d-file and to try and prevent Black from developing: 13... ♖d5!? (13... ♖d4!? looks risky after 14. h3 – 14. c3? ♖xe5 15. ♗xe5 ♗xf2+!; 14. ♖f3!? ♖c5 – 14... ♗c5 15. ♖f4, but 15... b5! appears to be adequate: 16. ♖xb5 ♖d5!) 14. ♖b3 (if White takes the pawn with 14. ♖xd5 exd5 15. ♖xd5 then Black obtains more than enough compensation with 15... ♖e6 16. ♖d1 ♖ae8 17. ♗f3 ♖d4) and now 14... a5!?

– 13. ♖g5 is not as dangerous as it may appear: 13... ♖d7 (worthy of attention is 13... ♖d5!?, but 13... ♗xb2 is quite dangerous, as Black is still undeveloped) 14. ♖d3 ♖d4 (14... ♖d6!, and Black has equalized fully. White's pieces don't look so harmonious now) 15. ♖ad1 (15. c3 ♖f6 16. ♖f4 would have been awkward for Black) 15... ♗c6 16. ♖b3 b5 17. ♖e7 ♖e8 18. ♖b4 ♗b6 19. ♗e4 ♖b7 20. ♗xd4 ♖xe7 – Black has equalized, and White now blundered in this rapid game:



21. ♗d6? ♗xd6 22. ♖xd6 a5–+, Antoms-D.Fridman, Jurmala 2012.

– 13. c3 is simply a useful move. Now 13... ♖d6 (13... ♖d5!? ½-½ Paljusaj-Kuljasevic, Sibenik 2011) 14. ♖d3 (14. ♖e1 ♗c7) 14... ♗c7 15. ♖f4 b6 16. ♖ad1 ♖b7 17. ♖fe1 ♖ad8 demonstrates that with sensible (but non-critical) play from both sides these positions are just equal, Kuljasevic-Sedlak, Zadar 2011.

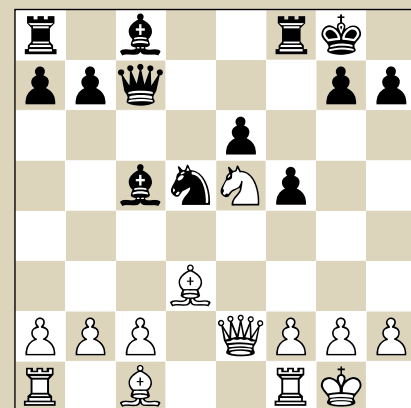
13... ♖d5!?

Shirov removes his sole defender!

Possible is 13... ♗c7 14. ♖e1 b6.

14. ♗e4 The prophylactic 14. a3 leaves White slightly better.

14... f5 As intended. 15. ♗e2 ♗c7



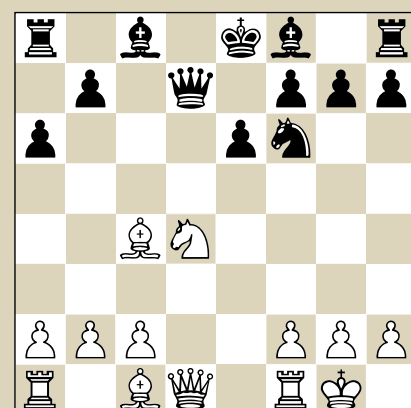
Black is already equal. He soon gained an edge after 16. ♖c4?! ♖d6 17. ♖f3 ♖d7 18. ♖xd5 exd5 19. ♖e3?! f4! 20. ♖d4 ♖f5 21. ♖c3 (21. c3 ♖ae8) 21... ♖ae8 22. ♗d2 ♖e4 23. ♖ad1 (23. ♖g5 f3) 23... h6 24. ♖fe1 ♗f7 25. ♗d4 b6+, Caruana-Shirov, Biel 2011.

Line B

9... ♖xd4 10. ♖xd4

In our comments to move 6 we already noted that 10. ♗xd4 ♗xd4 11. ♖xd4 ♖d7 is harmless. Indeed, the only scary-looking move 12. ♖b5?! is hitting thin air after 12... ♖c8!, while the normal 12. ♖f4 ♖c8 13. ♖b3 ♖c5 is just equal.

10... a6



11. ♖e1

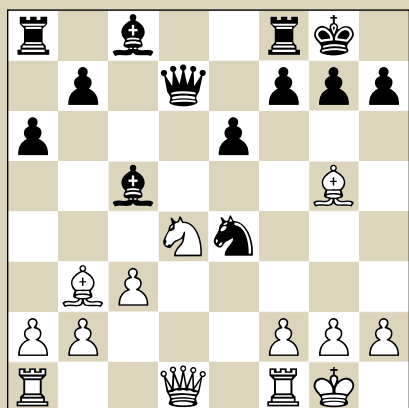
This is most popular in the 6... ♗d6 variation, so it is natural to consider it as the main move now, too. Let's look at some alternatives, based on the limited practice with 6... ♗d7 so far.

– 11. c3 White prophylactically covers the d4-knight, which renders 11...

♙c5 less useful now. After 11...♖c7 we have transposed into a fairly innocuous line normally reached via 6...♖d6.

An example from our SOS move order was 12.♙d3 ♙d6 13.g3 ♙d7 14.♙g5 ♙e5 15.♖f3 h6 16.♙e3 ♘d5 17.♙d2 ♙xd4 18.cxd4 ♙c6 19.♖e2 ♖b6 20.♖e5 0-0 and the isolated pawn gave Black the slightly better chances in Lu Yijie-Zhou Weiqi, Hefei 2011.

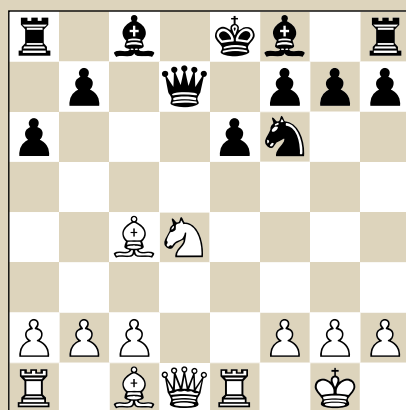
– 11.♙b3 ♙c5! (again 11...♖c7 transposes to a well-known theoretical position) 12.c3 0-0 13.♙g5 ♘e4



14.♙h4 (if 14.♙e3 then 14...b5!) 14...♙e7 15.♙xe7 ♖xe7 16.♖e1 ♘f6 17.♖f3 ♖c7 18.♖g3 ♖xg3 19.hxg3 ♙d7, with an equal endgame that Black won rather instructively in Tischbierek-Ni Hua, Biel 2011.

– 11.♙f4 does not look critical after 11...b5 12.♙b3 ♙b7. The game Womacka-D.Fridman, Gibraltar 2012, went 13.c3 ♙e7 (13...♙c5!? 14.♙e5 0-0) 14.♖e2 0-0 15.♖ad1 ♙d5 (15...♘d5) 16.♙e5 ♖fe8 17.♖d3 ♖b7 18.♙xd5 ♘xd5 19.♖f3 ♖ad8 20.♖fd1 ♙f8, with perhaps a slight initiative for White.

– 11.♙g5 is not very accurate after 11...♖c7! 12.♙d3 (12.♙xf6 leaves Black with a pleasant choice between 12...♖xc4 and 12...gxf6 13.♙b3 ♙g7) 12...♙d6 13.h3 ♙d7 14.♖e1 ♙h2+ (a well-known manoeuvre to worsen White's king with tempo) 15.♙h1 ♙e5 16.c3 h6 17.♙xf6 ♙xf6 18.♖f3 0-0, and White was already slightly worse in Herman-Perelshteyn, Lubbock 2011.



11...♙c5!

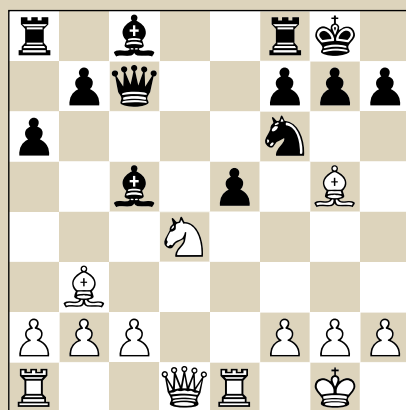
This is the way to take advantage of our sixth move. Instead, 11...♖c7 actually transposes to the main line after 6...♖d6. It certainly makes you think about the merits of 6...♖d7, doesn't it?

12.♙e3

This will yield nothing in the end. Perhaps 12.c3 is slightly more accurate, as the queen's bishop does not lose any time, since it wants to go to g5 anyway: 12...b5 13.♙b3 ♙xd4 (this is not forced, but we already saw Black go for the isolated pawn in the note on 11.c3 as well. It can be a good strategy to go for something tangible) 14.cxd4 ♙b7 15.♖d3 (White would not be worse either after 15.♙f4 0-0 16.♙e5) 15...0-0 16.♙g5 ♘d5, with equality in Gu Xiaobing-Zhang Xiaowen, Ningbo 2011.

12...0-0

Equally good is 12...♖c7 13.♙b3 0-0 14.♙g5 (14.c3 ♙d6 15.h3 h6 is equal) 14...e5!? (a good move but it is somewhat atypical, and it requires an accurate follow-up)



15.♘f3 and now rather than 15...♘g4?! (Lambrechts-Geurink, Groningen 2011) Black has 15...♙g4 16.♙xf6

gxf6 17.h3 ♖ad8 18.♖e2 ♙h5 when he is doing well.

13.♘f3 And not 13.♘xe6, due to 13...♖xd1 14.♖axd1 ♙xe6 15.♙xc5 ♙xc4 16.♙xf8 ♖xf8.

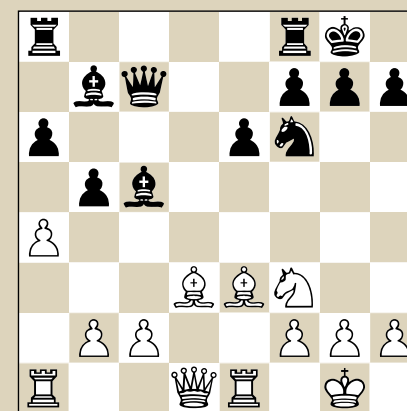
13...♖c7 14.♙d3

Nothing is achieved by 14.♙xc5 ♖xc5 15.♙d3 (the endgame after 15.♖d4 ♖xd4 16.♘xd4 b5 17.♙b3 ♙b7 is also equal) 15...b5.

14...b5

Here 14...b6 is also possible, not allowing White any play on the queenside. Still, the text is equally good.

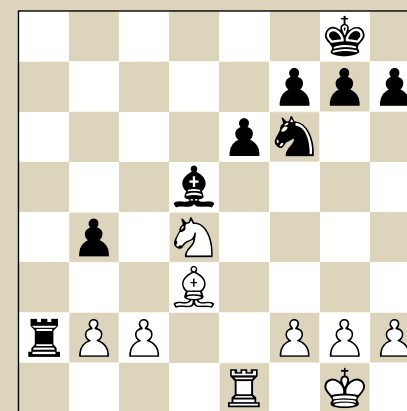
15.a4 ♙b7!



16.♙xc5 White cannot win the b-pawn, for after 16.axb5 axb5 17.♖xa8 ♖xa8 18.♙xb5 Black has 18...♘g4! 19.♙xc5 ♖xc5 20.♖e2 ♘xf2!, with slightly better play.

16...♖xc5 17.axb5 axb5 18.♖e2 If 18.♖e5 then 18...♙d5 (rather than 18...♙xf3 19.♖xc5 ♙xd1 20.♖xd1 b4 21.♖b5).

18...b4 19.♖e5 ♙d5 20.♖xa8 ♖xa8 21.♖d4 ♖xd4 22.♘xd4 ♖a2



Black is more active in the endgame, but White's position is solid. The game Alavi-Zhou Weiqi, Mashhad 2011, was drawn after 53 moves. ■



Hans Ree

Going his own way

Dick van Geet, who died on April 29 at the age of 80, was much more than the man who gave his name to an opening. His tactical acumen tended to obscure the fact that he was an original strategic thinker, whose experiments stood the test of correspondence chess at the highest level.

More than 20 years ago I wrote an article in this magazine – *No Joy with the Dutch* – about the sad lack of joyous eccentricity in Dutch chess life. It was based on conversations during an Open in Ostend with the Dutch IM Gerard Welling.

Welling is a connoisseur and a moderate practitioner of unusual openings. Before the rounds he showed us weird things like this: Kadas-Arkhipov,

Kecskemet 1984: 1.h4 e5 2.d4 exd4 3. ♖f3 c5 4.c4 d5 5.e3 dxe3 6.cxd5 exf2+ 7. ♖xf2 ♖f6 8. ♗b5+, and White is already winning.

Strangely enough, I found a game in my database: Gabor Kadas–Sergey Arkhipov, Kecskemet 1983: 1.h4 d5 2.d4 c5 3. ♖f3 cxd4 4.c3 dxc3 5.e4 dxe4 6. ♗xd8+ ♖xd8 7. ♖g5 cxb2 8. ♗xb2 ♖h6 9. ♖c3 f6 10.0-0-0+ ♖e8 11. ♖d5, and Black resigned.

Could it be the same Arkhipov, suffering two quick losses in the same place against 1.h4? I am not sure, because there are many players with this name.

Kadas' 1.h4 went far beyond anything that Welling would find acceptable in his own practice. In fact he claimed that Dutch players were only pseudo-originals, who after a loss with a bizarre opening always fell back on the safety of the good old 1.e4.

Michael Basman, the English torch-bearer of eccentricity, had told him that it was no fun playing unusual openings against Dutch players. An English opponent would join the fun and try to do something original himself. A Dutch player would soberly take a sacrificed pawn and solidly sit on it.

I remember a game I played at the Olympiad in Haifa in 1976. As White I occupied the centre with two pawns. My knights came to c3 and f3 and then my bishops to c4 and f4. Everything just as the textbooks had taught me 20 years earlier. I won quickly.

Raymond Keene had followed the game and said: 'Congratulations, Hans. A typical Dutch game. The classical style of Max Euwe. How simple chess can look.' I thought I noted a touch of condescendence in his praise, as if he were saying: classical maybe, but far from inspired.

Early independence

Dick van Geet, who died on April 29, 80 years old, was not an extremist in the spirit of Kadas, but he did go his own way. His name is connected with 1. ♖c3, an opening that goes under many different names, but considering the wealth of ideas that Dick contributed to it, Van Geet Opening seems the right name.

Apart from that one, there are many off-beat systems on which he put his mark, such as 1.d4 ♖f6 2.c4 ♖c6, which might be called the black Van Geet, or 1.b3, which he often played before Bent Larsen made the move popular.

The Dutch IM Gert Ligterink wrote in an obituary that a young chess player had told him that he had been surprised to learn that Van Geet had been an IM. 'I thought that people who played moves like 1. ♖c3 wouldn't become IMs. Quite a feat then.' The youngster might have been even more surprised if he had known that Van Geet was a GM in correspondence chess.

Well, in itself there is nothing wrong with 1. ♖c3, but you might say that people who play 1. ♖c3 all the time confine themselves too much. But that is not what Van Geet did. He valued the element of surprise, which was one reason to take up his opening, but also a reason not to play it invariably. Certainly not after 1994, when he published a booklet on it, chock-full of sharp ideas that before that time had only been known to him and some defeated opponents. Subsequently, his main weapon as White became 1.b3, a move he had been practicing since the early sixties.

In 1952 he became the U-20 champion of the Netherlands. I think his first important international event was the Student Olympiad in Varna in 1958,

where he scored 6½ out of 10 at Board 3. The same fine score was made at Board 4 by Joop van Oosterom, the later chess patron and correspondence World Champion. These Student Olympiads were taken quite seriously, especially in Eastern Europe. In Varna the Soviet Union had Tal and Spassky on the first two boards.

Van Geet opened with 1.♘c3 four times in Varna. In his other game as White he used the Trompowsky Opening. As Black his main weapon was 1.e4 ♘c6. In retrospect his choices seem quite reasonable: he was playing sensible openings on which there was very little theory at the time. But some commentators seem to have been half shocked, half in awe.

The Golden Age is never now

At the PAM tournament of 1961, an invitational international round robin in Utrecht, Van Geet beat the American grandmaster Arthur Bisguier. One of the organizers, Eduard Spanjaard, a strong player himself, wrote at the time: 'It is of course "impossible" to dispatch a bearer of the highest FIDE title with 1.♘c3, but nevertheless the fearless Van Geet did it. Van Geet is an enfant terrible in the respectable chess community, a chessplayer-cum-guerilla fighter; he plays rugby chess, with a cheerful negligence of the subtle opening systems which he never had time enough to study.'

By the way, my database has this game start with 1.e4 ♘f6 2.♘c3, but I don't believe this can be true.

Further on Spanjaard quotes Van Geet on his prospects as a player: 'I find it definitely wrong to give up an academic study (economics) when it appears that one can achieve something as a chess player. It's nice until you're about 30, but then you must stop. It's too unproductive.' And Van Geet adds to this: 'A grandmaster from the past had some standing. He was honoured and came into contact with the greatest celebrities. These *Schachnovelle* types no longer exist. In the past the play was subject to the personality. There was



NEW IN CHESS

Considering the wealth of ideas that Dick van Geet contributed to 1.♘c3, the opening deserves to bear his name.

interpersonal contact. Chess used to be a way to get to know one another. Not anymore. It's all about the board and the moves. So it's better to stay an amateur!'

To me this harsh dismissal of the chess world of 1961 seems quaint. I would say that he was living in a golden age of chess, which would last for decades. For me the golden age ended when chess computers became good; let's call it a silver age nowadays. But whatever the objective merits of Van Geet's nostalgia for the time when chess masters were supposed to be honoured and meet with celebrities, his complaint suggests that he *had*, at some stage, considered the possibility of becoming a professional player.

He remained an amateur, with unpredictable moves and unpredictable results.

Originality gone berserk

All tricks and traps, and 'originality' for its own sake, I used to think when I spent some thought at all on Van Geet's way of playing. But I was wrong. One doesn't become a correspondence GM with just tricks and traps.

Here is an example of his originality gone berserk, from a tournament that must have been the low point of his chess career: the IBM tournament of 1964, in which he only scored half a point in nine games.

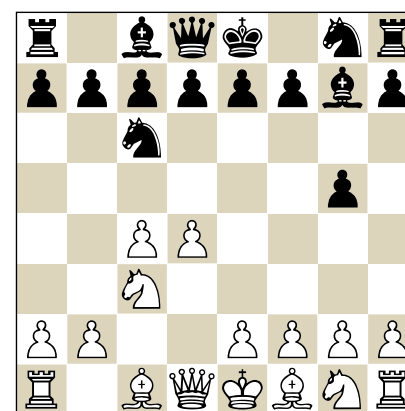
EO 65.9 – A10

Gedeon Barcza

Dick van Geet

Amsterdam 1964

1.c4 g5 Well, OK. Much later Michael Basman would write that 1.c4 guarantees White a difficult game after 1...g5, but of course Barcza was blissfully unaware of this. **2.d4 ♗g7 3.♘c3 ♘c6**



But this is going too far. Black combines a touch of basmania with his own predilection for the early knight move. From Basman's games we know that the immediate 3...c5 or the more subtle 3...h6 would be, let's say, 'interesting'. **4.d5 ♘e5 5.♙xg5 ♘xc4 6.♙c1 c6 7.e4 b5** Tricks and traps. One can vaguely discern a tactical idea here: taking on b2, then giving up the knight and winning one back with ...b4. A triumph of the long diagonal that would be a frequent motif in Van Geet's later games, but not this time. **8.dxc6 ♘xb2 9.c7 ♙xc7 10.♘xb5 ♙a5+**



11. ♖d2 ♜xd2+ 12. ♙xd2 ♜b8 13. ♙e3 ♙b7 14. ♙xa7 ♜d8 15. f3 f5 16. ♜b1 fxe4 17. ♙d4 e5 18. ♙xb2 d5 19. ♙a3 ♙c6 20. ♜c1 1-0.

Kick Langeweg, who like me was a spectator during that round, told me that after the game Barcza had asked Van Geet why he had played the strange move 1...g5, and that Van Geet had answered: 'Because I was afraid of your expertise in the endgame.'

Remarkable. But at least you can say that he was ahead of his time. In my database this is the first game with 1.c4 g5 and only in 1968, four years later, did the second one follow. If only he had been able to keep his hands off the Van Geet knight at move three...

In fact, there was method in this madness: clearing the long diagonal by putting pressure on d4, but still in an unsophisticated manner.

Originality, but more sober

When I was preparing this article I got much information from Gerard Welling, who had often worked together with Van Geet and had kept many files on the opening variations they had investigated.

He pointed out that Van Geet had always been in search of what he called 'a philosophy', a grand strategic scheme behind the tactical variations.

One motif dear to Van Geet was the long diagonal, which had to be occupied and then cleared of units that were blocking it.

In an article that appeared in 1970 in the Dutch magazine *Schaakbulletin* and was expanded in the German magazine *Kaissiber* 21 (2005), he wondered which move was better, 1.g3 or 1.b3. Against 1.g3 speaks the fact that an obstructing black pawn on d5 is better protected than one on e5 that would obstruct the diagonal of ♙b2. But there is another side to it: attacking d5 with c2-c4 is much easier than attacking e5 with f2-f4, which is always risky. Then again, the other attack on the obstructing pawn, from the centre, is easier when it is the diagonal a1-h8 that has

to be cleared; d2-d4 against pawn e5 can be more easily arranged than the corresponding move e2-e4 against d5.

All in all, Van Geet found that 1.b3 was at least as logical as 1.g3. An opposite opinion was expressed in the previous issue of *New In Chess* by Anish Giri: 'As I had noticed many times before, the relations between bishops g2/b7 and b2/g7 are always in favour of the kingside bishops.'

Anyway, 1.b3 served Van Geet well, as it would serve Bent Larsen, who introduced the move in his international practice in 1968.

Vindicated by Bent Larsen

In *Kaissiber* Van Geet, referring to his victory over Lubosh Kavalek at the Hoogovens tournament in 1967, wrote: 'During the game Bent Larsen played at the board next to me and showed himself quite interested. Later he asked me about it. I gladly told him about my ideas, for I had often been showered with scorn and mockery since around 1960, when I had started to play 1.b3. "Dear Dick," it was said, "if only you would spend some time to learn a real opening and finally stop with nonsense moves like 1.b3 or 1.♘c3, you might perhaps become a decent chess player!" Even Donner wrote as a comment on my 1.b3: "Giving up all hope of an opening advantage."

'That's why I was very glad when Larsen asked me about it and later even took up the move himself – and with great success. About my "nonsense" people could laugh, but when the great Larsen (and later even Fischer) started playing it – well, that was something different. That should shut them up a bit. That gave me some satisfaction. That's how man is.'

As always with his off-beat openings, strategic plans had to be supported by sharp tactics.

VO 8.7 – A01

Dick van Geet

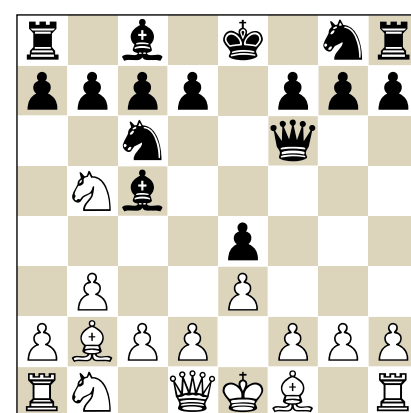
Tim Krabbé

Netherlands 1981

1.b3 e5 2.♙b2 ♘c6 3.♘f3 Van Geet's invariable choice, in line with

his view that e5 should be attacked at all cost. Larsen used to play 3.c4 or 3.e3. Strangely enough, in Ilya Odessky's book *Play 1.b3!* Van Geet, the most persistent practitioner of that move, isn't even mentioned, nor is his move 3.♘f3. Odessky concentrates on 3.e3, even though he concludes that it yields White nothing.

3...e4 4.♘d4 ♜f6 5.e3 ♙c5 A principled choice, as the Russians would say. Now 5.♘xc6 is not correct, and 5.c3 would be miserable. **6.♘b5**



The move that saves the variation. **6...♜xb2 7.♘1c3 ♘b4 8.♜b1 ♜xc2 9.♘xc7+ ♙d8 10.♘xa8** Another possibility is 10.♜h5, which would lead to a draw after 10...♘xa2 (but 10...b6 seems better) 11.♜xc5 ♘xc3. **10...♘f6 11.a3 ♜xd1+ 12.♙xd1 ♘c6 13.b4 ♙d6 14.b5 ♘e5 15.b6** White has saved his stranded knight on a8 and went on to win.

Tiger claws

The Hoogovens tournament of 1967 was Van Geet's greatest success in over-the-board play. His victory over me in the first round may not have caused great ripples, but he went on to beat Kavalek, Ciric, Donner, Pomar and Robatsch in what the tournament bulletin called 'Van Geet gangster style'. In the Dutch press he was called The Tiger.

Halfway the tournament, with 5 out of 7, he was trailing the leaders Spassky and Lutikov by half a point, while being a point ahead of Larsen and Gligoric. He finished with 7½ out of 15; six wins, six losses and only three draws.

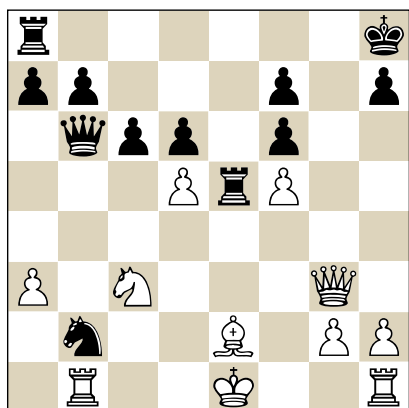
VO 18.7 – A50

Arturo Pomar

Dick van Geet

Beverwijk (Hoogovens) 1967

1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 ♘c6 Later, when 3. ♘f3 became popular, Van Geet had to give up this opening, as the position after 3. ♘f3 e6 would have been too normal for him. **3.d5** But this, or 3. ♘c3, is what he liked to meet. **3... ♘e5 4. e4 e6 5.f4** Ambitious, but White is weakening his position. **5... ♘g6 6. ♙d3 exd5 7.cxd5 ♙b4+ 8. ♘c3 0-0 9. ♘e2** Better seems 9. ♘f3, when Van Geet surely would not have been tempted by the dubious pawn snatch **9... ♗e8 10.0-0 ♙xc3 11.bxc3 ♘xe4. 9...d6 10.f5 ♘e5 11. ♙g5 c6 12.a3 ♙xc3+ 13. ♘xc3 ♗b6 14. ♙e2 ♗e8 15. ♙xf6 gxf6 16. ♗d2** White seems to have consolidated, but now Van Geet sharpens the struggle with a promising piece sacrifice. **16... ♙xf5 17.exf5 ♘c4 18. ♗d3 ♘xb2 19. ♗g3+ ♙h8 20. ♖b1 ♗e5**



White can still defend, but it is not easy. **21. ♘a4** would probably lead to a draw after **21... ♗xe2+ 22. ♙xe2 ♗e8+ 23. ♙f1 ♗a6+ 24. ♙g1 ♘xa4 25. ♗xd6**. Another possibility is **21. ♘d1 ♗xe2+ 22. ♙xe2 ♗b5+ 23. ♙d2 ♗xd5+ 24. ♙c1 ♗g8**, with an unclear position. **21. ♗f1 ♗ae8 22. ♗f3 ♗g1+ 23. ♗f1 ♗d4 24. ♗f3 ♗e3** Black regains his piece and keeps a strong attack. **25. ♗xe3 ♗xe3 26. ♗xd6** Threatening mate, but Black comes first. **26... ♘d3+ 27. ♙d2 ♘c5+ 28. ♙e1 ♗xc3+ 29. ♙f1 ♙g7 30.dxc6 ♘e4 31.cxb7 ♘d6 32. b8 ♗ ♘e4 33. ♗d1 ♗c2 34. ♗b5 ♘c3 35. ♗c4 ♗xe2+ 35... ♗xf5+** would have decided much more quickly,

ly, but White's position is hopeless anyway. Black won after 57 moves.

He kept playing in tournaments occasionally, but never came close to his performance of 1967 – until 1997, when at the age of 65, probably retired from his professional duties, he took part in his first World Senior Championship and finished shared second behind Janis Klovans.

Curse of the computer

Long before this, his serious love had become correspondence chess. His first big success as a correspondence player had been his victory in the '40 Jahre BDF' tournament, a jubilee tournament of the German correspondence federation played from 1986 to 1992.

There, his opening as White was still 1. ♘c3. With black he played 1.d4 ♘f6 2.c4 ♘c6 or 2...b6, or 1.e4 ♘a6. As a shocking surprise weapon he once met 1.e4 with 1...e5. His openings worked well, even in this high-level correspondence tournament.

Gerard Welling sent me a copy of an article by Van Geet that appeared first in Tim Harding's magazine *Chess Mail* (2004) and later in his book *The Write move* (2005). The article had the provocative title 'Without a computer I might have won the Von Massow tournament.'

The Hans-Werner von Massow Memorial Tournament, played from 1996 to 2001, was extremely strong. Only correspondence GMs took part, among them all living World Champions, with the exception of Hans Berliner. It was won by the German Volker-Michael Anton and the Dutchman Gert Timmerman with 10 points out of 14 games. Van Geet scored 7½ points.

As White he had switched to 1.b3 and as Black he was still playing systems based on ... ♘a6, but against 1.d4 he had added a new weapon to his armoury: the Leningrad Dutch with ... ♘h6.

In an early stage of the tournament he had bought a computer, which seemed to serve him well for a time. But in his article he showed six positions in which, against his better judge-

ment, he had let the computer direct him onto the wrong path.

So, without a computer he might (might, might...) have scored three points more. On the other hand, Van Geet conceded that 'what if' stories are always dubious. What if his opponents had also done without a computer? They might also have fared better...

I think this was all a bit tongue-in-cheek, but his main message stands: use your own brain and treat the computer as a servant, not a master.

Some things I did not know

Early this year, Van Geet announced that he had played his last correspondence game. For him, computers had taken the fun out of it. The Dutch correspondence chess federation reacted by proposing a tournament without the use of computers, but there were very few entries.

Indeed, to enter such a tournament would demand an almost superhuman trust, not only in one's opponents, but also in oneself. The temptation to switch on the computer ('only a blunder-check of course...') would be almost irresistible.

Soon afterwards it became clear that there had been another reason for Van Geet to announce his retirement. He was terminally ill.

While preparing this article I have learned more about Dick van Geet than in the almost 50 years that I used to meet him personally. I learned that he was not a tactical opportunist, but an independent strategical thinker who stood his ground against the best correspondence players. I learned that in France he could give a lecture in French, which even for a Dutchman from his generation is a rare feat. And most surprisingly, I found that he had written not only a small book on the Van Geet Opening, but a much bigger book in Dutch about God: *De meest essentiële zaken zijn onzichtbaar* (the most essential things are invisible), 2006. A collection of 365 aphorisms with comments, it is an erudite and thoughtful defence of Christianity and an exhortation to the imitation of Christ. ■



Jan Timman

Is modern-day chess *really* all about preparation?

T

he previous issue contained a quote from Gata Kamsky that I reproduce here in its entirety: 'It has nothing really to do with chess (...) It used to be just a game of intelligent people, they play against each other and it was just pure chess: Who is strong on the board? But right now chess, as you can see from the matches for the world championship, it becomes more and more of a team effort. Basically your whole team is studying for a year. The seclusion, all they do is chess chess chess, analyse lines, prepare. And then the candidates, both of them – the opponents – all they have to do is simply memorize those preparations, get to the board and just show that preparation. There is no chess skill involved in that! It's just all memory and that's it' (New In Chess 2011/4, p. 51)

In 1996, Kamsky played a world championship match against Karpov in Elista. His preparation was impressive. He withdrew for months with a team of grandmasters to work on his opening repertoire. Nothing like this had ever been seen in the pre-computer area. Kamsky lost the match, and after another disastrous tournament in Amsterdam, he retired from chess – for almost 10 years.

After his comeback the computer ruled supreme. Now Kamsky decided to stop working so hard on his preparation and instead to play systems in which knowledge wasn't so paramount – and with success. Kamsky

'You'd wonder if Carlsen's results would be even better if he were to build a sharp opening repertoire as White.'

put his trust in his intuition, his chess intelligence.

This partly explains his statements on modern-day chess in relation to that of the past. Yet his proposition that the current world championship matches are all about memory is debatable. It's true that both Anand and Gelfand had impressive and hard-working teams of seconds, but how did this affect the actual over-the-board play? Gelfand was armed to the teeth with opening theory. Anyone playing the Sveshnikov and the Grünfeld Indian is bound to have a vast amount of knowledge. But Anand was a bitter disappointment in the area of opening theory. When he played the Nimzo-Indian for the first time, in Game 9, he made a serious error in a well-known theoretical position in the early middlegame. In Game 8, Anand played 1.e4 for the first time and was caught unawares by the Sveshnikov. In the same position, Kamsky would have gone for the Rossolimo as White – an ad hoc choice to sidestep the extensive theory of the Sveshnikov. Anand, how-

ever, went for the Sveshnikov and got nowhere.

Now you'd think that Anand's star seconds could have done either of two things: make a thorough study of the Sveshnikov or fall back on the repertoire with 1.d4. Instead they went for a third option: they went and studied the Rossolimo Variation. Talk about topsy-turvy!

Anand's preparation often falling short, both players were quickly thrown back on their own brain power. If Anand had been as well prepared as his challenger, Kamsky's words might have come true.

In the Tal Memorial, too, you couldn't help noticing that opening preparation wasn't quite as important a factor as you'd have expected. Carlsen didn't win a single game as White. He has been known to say that he isn't all that interested in opening preparation; his main forte is the middlegame, in which he manages to outplay many of his opponents with positional means. You'd wonder if his results would be even better if he were to build a sharp opening repertoire as White. This is not entirely certain. Carlsen's repertoire is aimed at avoiding an early crisis in the game. He invariably aims for middlegames that lend themselves to a strategic approach. Sharp lines do not really fit in with this.

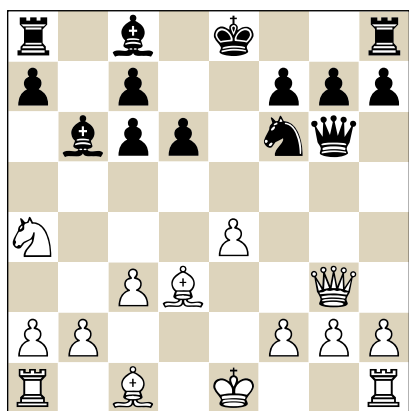
It wasn't until Round 5 that Carlsen scored his first win. Interestingly enough, Radjabov, the new number 4 in the world rankings, also went for an opening that failed to yield him the slightest advantage.

SO 5.13 – C45
Teimour Radjabov
Magnus Carlsen
 Moscow 2012 (5)

1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.d4

Not such a surprising choice, you'd say. Radjabov often plays the Scotch. But during the press conference Carlsen said that he had hardly taken it into account. A good friend of his had told him that Radjabov would probably not play the Scotch.

3...exd4 4.♗xd4 ♙c5 5.♗xc6 ♜f6 6.♜f3 bxc6 7.♜g3 d6 8.♗c3 ♜g6 9.♙d3 ♗f6 10.♗a4 ♙d4 11. c3 ♙b6

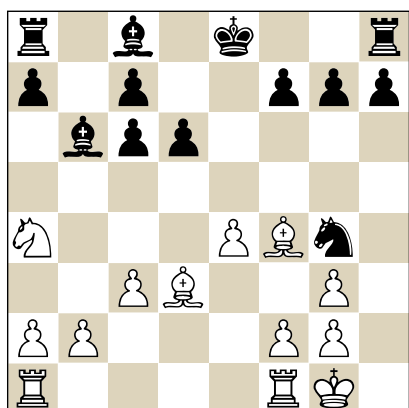


12.0-0

After this move White certainly has no opening advantage. The white king is not very well placed on the kingside. In Radjabov-Aronian, Wijk aan Zee 2009, there followed 12.f3, and after 12...♗d7 13.♙f4 f6 14.♙c4 ♗e5 15.♜xg6+ a draw was agreed. Not exactly an encouraging example, but Radjabov was probably happy with a draw, as he was leading the tournament.

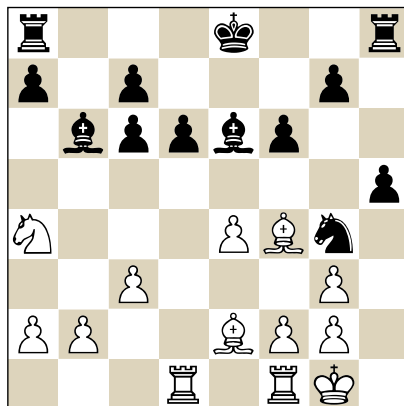
12.♜xg6 hxg6 13.h3 might have been White's best chance to play for an advantage.

12...♜xg3 13.hxg3 ♗g4 14.♙f4



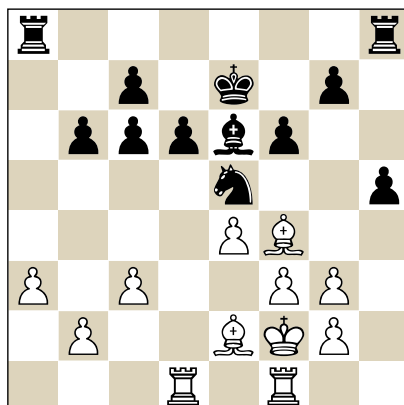
14...f6 Strengthening his grip on the centre. Black already has slightly more elbow room.

15.♞ad1 h5 16.♙e2 ♙e6



17.♗xb6 The collapse of White's opening strategy.

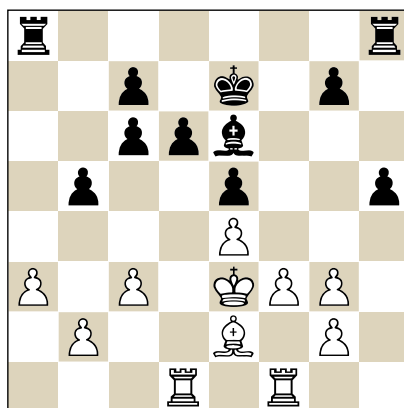
17...axb6 18.a3 ♙e7 19.f3 ♗e5 20.♙f2



20...b5

Afterwards Carlsen said he had not been 'entirely sure' of this move, and it's true that 20...♙b3 looks even stronger. Now Black can meet 21.♞de1 with 21...c5. White is entirely bereft of activity.

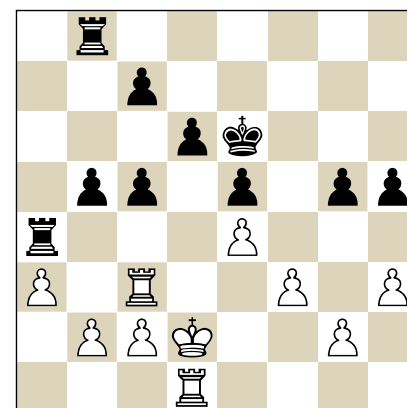
21.♙xe5 fxe5 22.♙e3



The alternative was 22.f4 in order to create some activity. Radjabov, who

had already used up a lot of time, remains strikingly passive.

Carlsen, incidentally, had interesting things to say about this position. It had made him think of 'some old game of Capablanca'. The game referred to was played in the same city 76 years ago. This is the position after Black's 30th move:



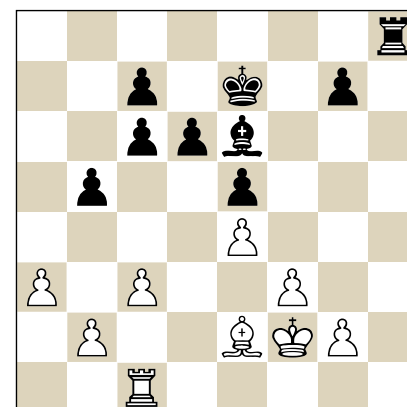
Kan-Capablanca, Moscow 1936
 position after 30...h5

The set-up is virtually the same, except that the white g3-pawn is on h3 and there are no bishops on the board. Capablanca played the advance ...g5-g4, the h-pawns were swapped and Black's rook penetrated decisively along the opened h-file. The game, with comments by Capablanca, may be found in Edward Winter's book about Capablanca.

22...h4

Carlsen also opens the h-file. This is the best way to make progress.

23.gxh4 ♜xh4 24.♞h1 ♞ah8 25. ♞xh4 ♞xh4 26.♞c1 ♞h2 27.♙f2 ♞h8



28.♙e3

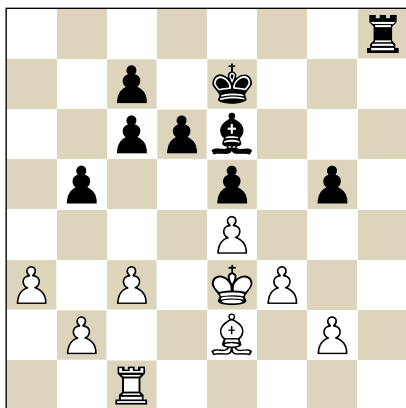
Radjabov persists in his wait-and-see approach. Carlsen said that he



Jan Timman

had been certain of 28.c4, after which Black has an interesting way to play for a win: 28...bxc4 29.♙xc4 ♖b8 30. b4 d5, and Black takes his king to d6. It is possible that White was afraid of this possibility.

28...g5



29.♙d3

But now there was no direct drawback to 29.c4. Carlsen had intended 29... bxc4 30.♙xc4 ♙xc4 31.♖xc4 ♔d7, with some practical chances.

The computer assesses this position as dead equal, yet White would find

it anything but easy to play the rook ending.

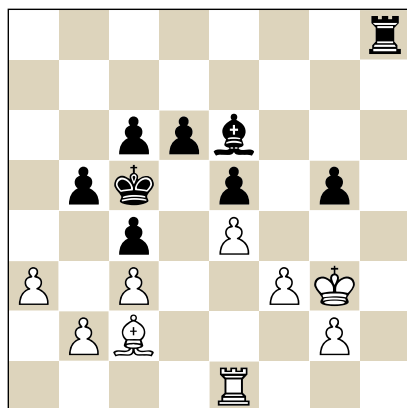
29...♔d7 30.♖a1 ♙b3 Preventing the a-pawn from advancing.

31.♖c1 ♙c8 32.♙f2 ♙b7 33.♙g3 ♙e6 Black withdraws the bishop again to prevent the white king from penetrating.

34.♖a1 ♙b6 35.♖c1 c5

And finally Black sets his pawn steam-roller in motion.

36.♖a1 c4 37.♙c2 ♙c5 38.♖e1 c6



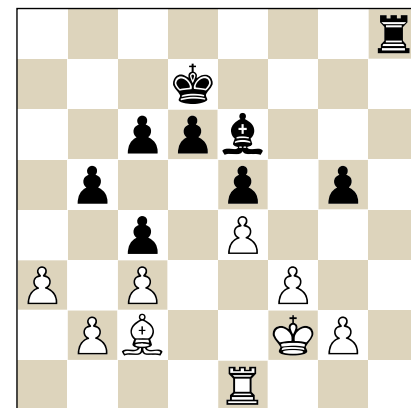
39.♙b1

White's rook has to await develop-

ments on e1. If the white rook were to leave the e-file, Black has the strong ...d6-d5.

39...♙b6 40.♙c2 ♙c7 41.♙f2 ♙d7

Black's plan is becoming clear: he wants to take his king to f6 and then advance his d-pawn. This makes it hard for White to continue to wait.



42.a4

The correct moment for this advance.

42...bxa4 43.♖a1

Another accurate move. White wants to cover the b-pawn from a2.



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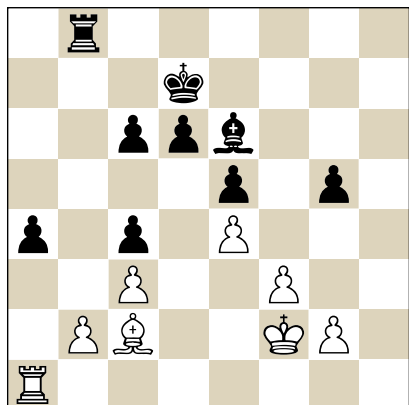
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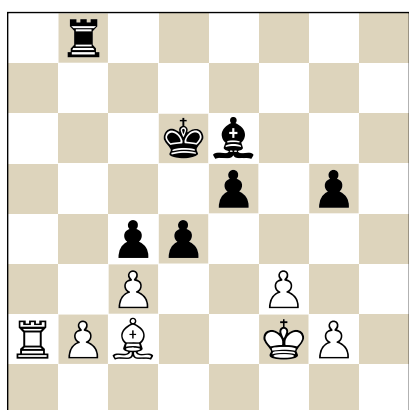
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43...♖b8



Black had been keeping his rook on the h-file. Now that the queenside has been opened, the half-open b-file has become a better base.

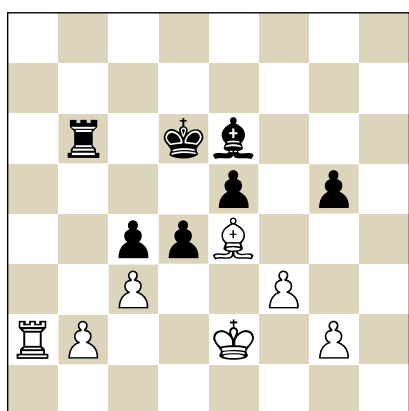
44.♖a2 d5 45.exd5 cxd5 46.♙xa4+ ♔d6 47.♙c2 d4



Slowly but surely, Black is making progress. But his advantage is not decisive yet.

48.♙e4 ♖b6 49.♙e2

White's play during the entire game has been characterized by indecisiveness. 49.g4 was the correct move here, preventing Black from gaining too much territory. But even after the text White is still not lost.



49...g4 Carlsen pounces immediately.

NEW IN CHESS



Teimour Radjabov compared the mistake that resulted in his only loss in the tournament to a 'mouse slip at the ICC'.

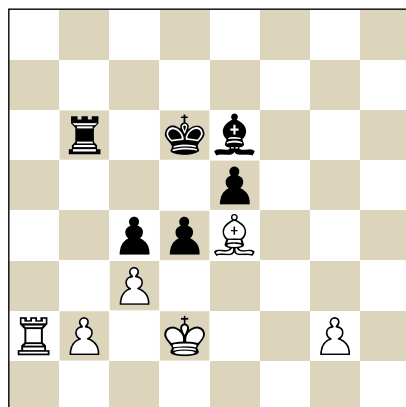
50.fxg4

Strategically risky, because in certain circumstances Black may get two connected passed pawns. Yet despite the swap, White remains in drawing territory, although he will have to continue to play extremely accurately.

The alternative was 50.♙f2, preventing the further advance of the g-pawn.

50...♙xg4+ 51.♙d2 ♙e6

Preventing the swap on d4. The bishop is on its way to the central d5-square.



52.♙c2 The decisive error. Afterwards Radjabov indicated that he could have saved the draw with 52.♙c1!, intending to meet 52...d3 with 53.♖a5. Black will not be able to swap bishops then and can make no further progress, which is why he is forced to play 52...

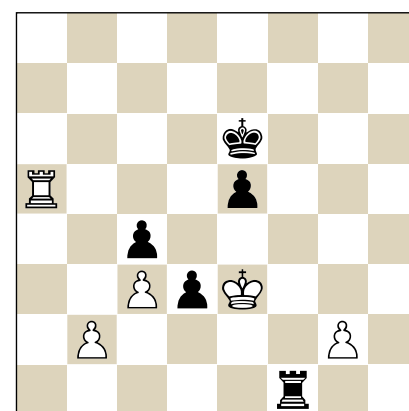
♙d5. After 53.♙xd5 ♙xd5 54.cxd4 exd4 a rook ending arises that at first sight looks like winning for Black.

Carlsen thought the same, although he wasn't quite sure. With 55.♖a5+ ♙e4 56.♖h5! White will just manage to hold, because he has the 'long side' with his rook. The g-pawn no longer plays a part and he might as well get rid of it as quickly as possible.

52...♙d5 53.♙xd5 d3+!

An important intermediate check to prevent White from swapping on d4. Now the rook ending with two connected passed pawns is an easy win.

54.♙d2 ♙xd5 55.♙e3 ♖g6 56.♖a5+ ♙e6 57.♙e4 ♖g4+ 58.♙f3 ♖f4+ 59.♙e3 ♖f1



White resigned.



Jan Timman

McShane's performance in Moscow was spectacular. After beating Aro-nian he went on to dismiss Kramnik and the other ace Morozevich. His win over Kramnik must have been especially sweet. Thus far, he had been White against Kramnik four times, scoring only half a point – an *angst-gegner*. But if such an opponent al-ways has to play black, it is not easy for him. This was borne out in Moscow. McShane didn't achieve much, but when the Englishman found himself in time-trouble, Kramnik suddenly seemed to wax ambitious. He didn't get very far, though.

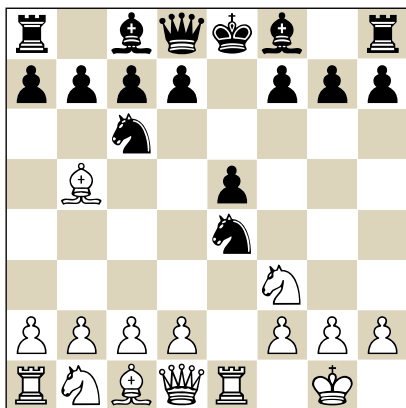
RL 7.4 – C67

Luke McShane

Vladimir Kramnik

Moscow 2012 (7)

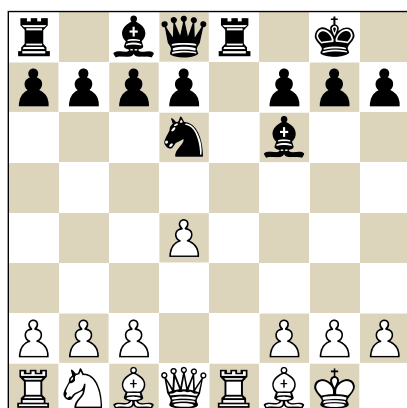
**1.e4 e5 2.♘f3 ♘c6 3.♙b5 ♗f6
4.0-0 ♗xe4 5.♖e1**



Not very ambitious, yet an approach that contains some venom, as recent practical examples have shown.

**5...♗d6 6.♗xe5 ♙e7 7.♙f1 ♗xe5
8.♖xe5 0-0 9.d4 ♙f6 10.♖e1 ♖e8**

Virtually the only move that used to be played here was 10...♗f5, but it seems that Black still ends up with problems then. However this may be, Kramnik and other strong players have started playing this move of late. The rook move is hardly new: it was played first in Steinitz-Zukertort, first match game, 1886.



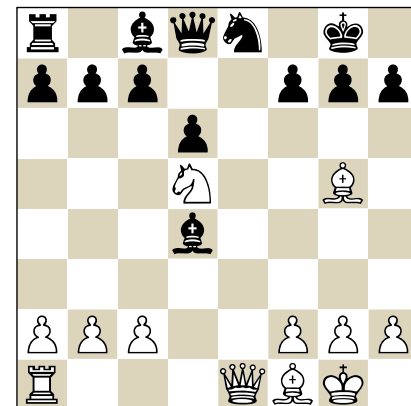
11.♙f4

Steinitz played the obvious 11.c3, and later white players also played this covering move almost exclusively. The text boils down to a long-term pawn sacrifice. White gives his central pawn for positional compensation and at-tacking chances.

11...♖xe1 12.♙xe1 ♗e8 13.♗c3

Principled play. With 13.c3 White could still have gone for some tame line or other.

13...♙xd4 14.♗d5 d6 15.♙g5

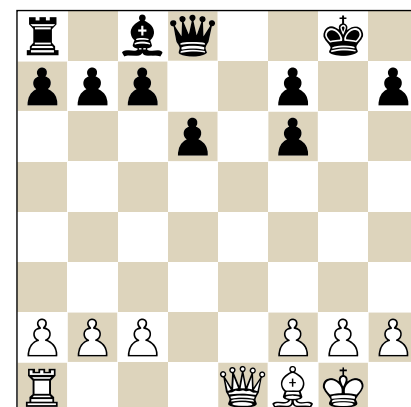


15...♙f6 The only move. After 15...f6 16.♙e3 ♙xb2 17.♖b1 c6 18.♙c4! Black would have been in serious trouble.

16.♗xf6+ ♗xf6 17.♙xf6

Continuing to capture is White's best option. Black was threatening to con-solidate with 17...♙e6.

17...gxf6



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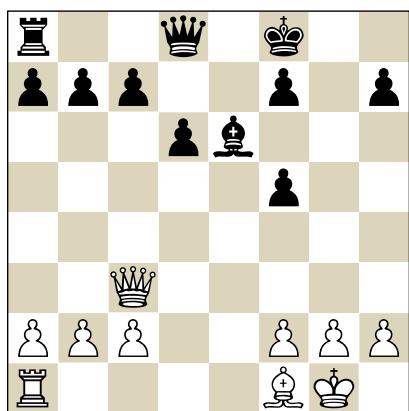
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18. ♖e4

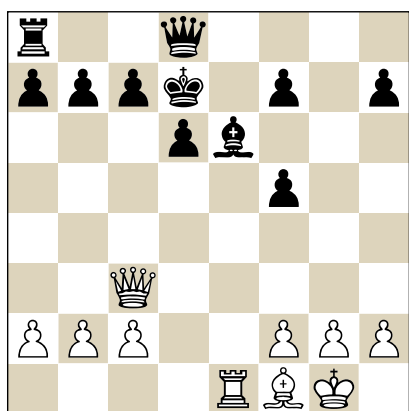
Najer-Bacrot, Plovdiv 2012, saw 18. ♔d3, which is probably slightly more accurate. White keeps his options open as to which square to play his queen to. After 18...f5 19. ♖e3 ♔e6 20. ♖f3 c6 21. ♔xf5 White was slightly better.

18...f5 19. ♖e3

This move cost McShane an hour, a sign that he was out of his preparation. The computer assesses 19. ♖f3, in order to keep an eye on b7, as slightly stronger. But it is much of a muchness.

19...♔e6 20. ♖g3+ ♔f8 21. ♖c3**21...♔e7**

Kramnik opts for putting his king in the centre. The alternative was 21...♔g8, when White can repeat moves. But McShane was planning 22. ♖e1 to take the rook to e3. The white position looks good; he is in no danger whatever.

22. ♖e1 ♔d7**23. ♔c4**

This invitation to swap bishops fails to yield anything. A good alternative was 23. ♖b4, in order to continue to disrupt the coordination in the enemy camp. After 23...b6 White has a



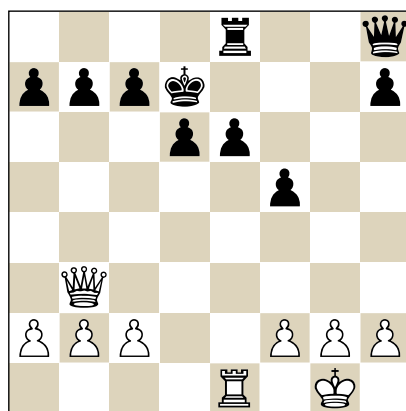
ETERI KUBIASHVILI

One of the most dramatic games was Kramnik's loss against McShane. 'It was comparable to that famous game in London against Magnus when I managed not to win with a piece up.'

chance for a late fianchetto: 24.g3, followed by 25. ♔g2. The white bishop is very well placed on the long diagonal. And White retains excellent compensation.

23...♖h8

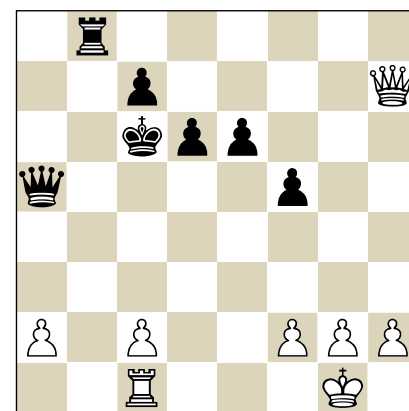
A good move, but 23...♖g8, to provide extra cover for e6, would have been more accurate.

24. ♔xe6+ fxe6 25. ♖b3 ♖e8**26. ♖xb7**

This is how White regains his pawn, after which his king is slightly safer. But Black gets the more compact pawn structure. The chances are equal.

26...♖b8 27. ♖xa7 ♖xb2 28. ♖a4+ ♖b5 29. ♖h4

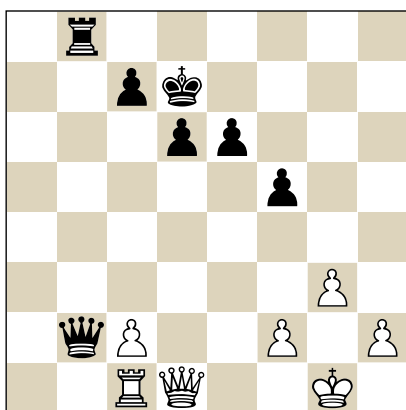
Going for the h-pawn. An accurate reply. Both players are going to capture a weak outside pawn.

30. ♖xh7+ ♔c6 31. ♖c1

A temporary square for the rook. White wants to keep his c-pawn, possibly withdraw the queen and then advance the h-pawn.

31...♖xa2 32. ♖h5 ♖b2 33. ♖d1 ♔d7 Another option was 33...♖c3, fixing the white c-pawn. But after the text the position remains balanced, although White's safe king and passed h-pawn make life slightly easier for him.

34.g3

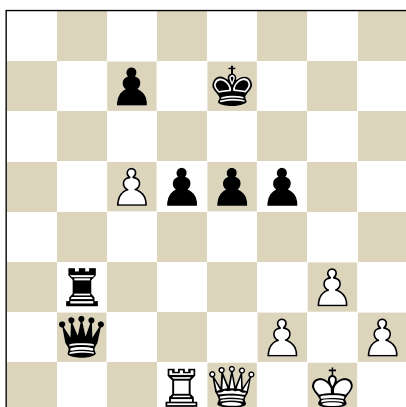


34...e5

This advance is less accurate, since it blocks the black queen from returning via the long diagonal. In combination with the passed h-pawn this may cause problems later on. But the position remains equal, provided Black continues to play accurately.

A good move was 34...f4, intending to swap on g3, after which White will not be able to exploit his passed h-pawn.

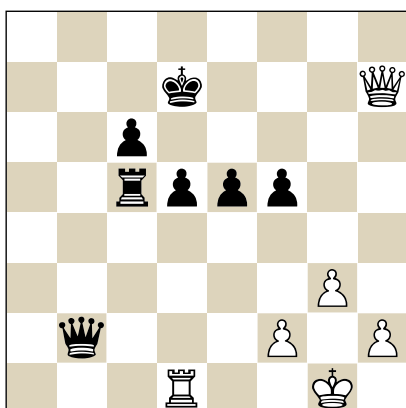
35.c4 ♖e7 36.♗e1 ♜b3 37.c5 d5 38.♞d1



White moves his rook one square sideways to give his queen a free hand.

38...c6 39.♗a5 ♖d7 40.♗a4 ♜b5 41.♗h4 The queen appears on the kingside for the second time. This time Black will have to be careful.

41...♞xc5 42.♗h7+



42...♞d6

Better was 42...♞e6 43.♗g6+ ♖e7!. Black must keep his king near the kingside in order to stop the h-pawn. After 44.♗xf5 e4!, followed by 45...♗f6, he has nothing to fear.

Instead, Kramnik is going to take his king to the queenside, where, in principle, it will be safe. The problem, however, is that the h-pawn is getting a clear field now.

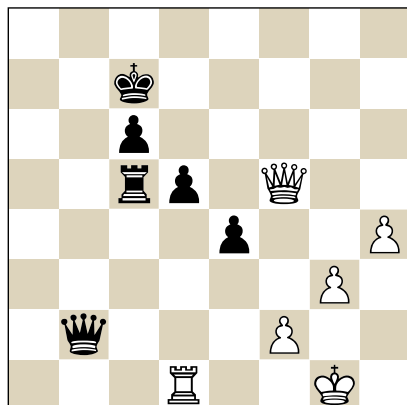
43.♗g6+

Giving him a new chance. Stronger was 43.♗xf5, with a large advantage.

43...♞c7?

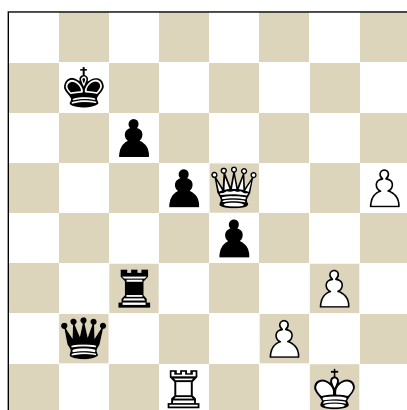
Correct was 43...♞e7. Now White will get a decisive advantage.

44.♗xf5 e4 45.h4



The time is ripe to start advancing the passed pawn.

45...♞c3 46.♗e5+ ♖b7 47.h5



47...♞b3

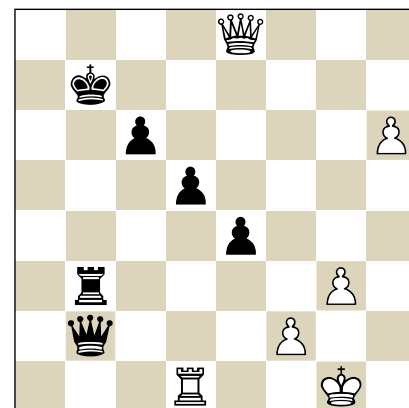
McShane had expected 47...♞c2, which is actually the best defence because the rook is more active on c2. If White swaps the queens, he cannot be certain of a win, since the black king will be just in time to stop the white outside kingside pawns from queen-ing. The correct way is 48.♗e7+

♖b6 49.♗d8+ ♖b5 50.♗b8+ ♖c4 51.♗f4!, and White is winning.

48.♗e7+ ♖b6 49.♗d8+

It is understandable that White continues to give queen checks in order to gain time. But there was nothing against advancing immediately with 49.h6, when Black has no defence, e.g. 49...e3 50.fxe3 ♗e2 51.♞c1.

49...♖b7 50.♗d7+ ♖b6 51.♗d8+ ♖b7 52.♗e7+ ♖b6 53.♗e8 ♖b7 54.h6

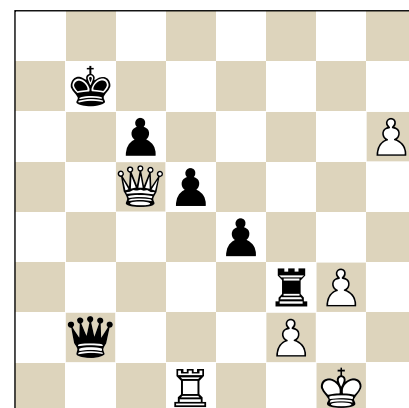


Finally!

54...♞f3 55.♗e7+ ♖a6 56.♗c5

56.h7 would have won as well, but the text makes more sense. White combines attack and defence.

56...♖b7 57.♗e7+ ♖a6 58.♗c5 ♖b7

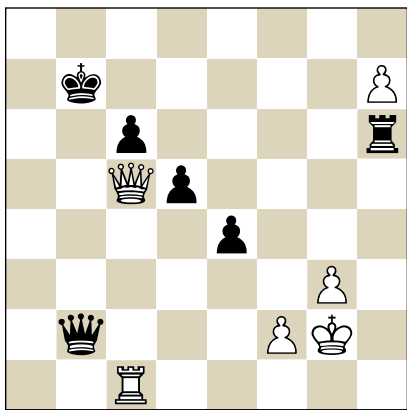


59.♞c1

Not exactly wrong, but with 59.h7 ♞f7 60.h8 ♗! White could have won at once.

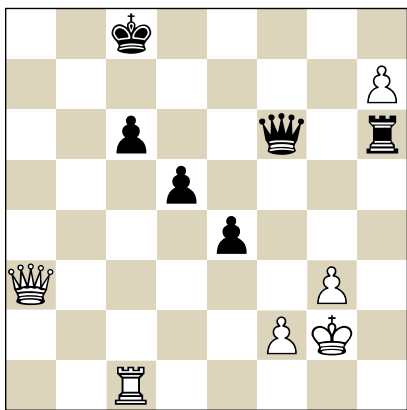
59...♞f6 60.h7 ♞h6 61.♖g2?

But this is a serious mistake, letting the win slip through White's fingers. After 61.♗e7+ ♖a6 62.♞d1 Black is hopelessly lost. 62...♞f6 is simply met by 63.h8 ♗, and all Black has left is some harmless checks.



61...Kb3?

Despite the fact that he had plenty of time, Kramnik fails to exploit White's mistake. With 61...Kf6! he could have held the game. But the situation is different from what people thought afterwards. After 62. Qb4+ Kc8 63. Qa3 Black has the following possibilities:



ANALYSIS DIAGRAM

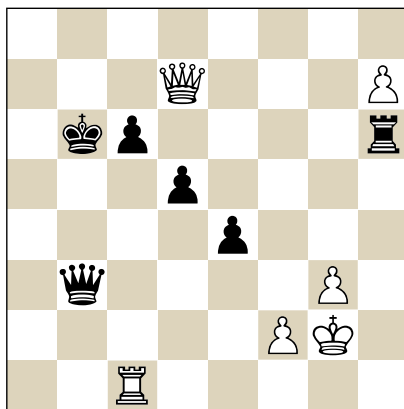
A) 63...Qf3+? After the game this was considered the drawing move. But the rook ending is a narrow win for White after 64. Qxf3 exf3+ 65. Kxf3 Kb7 (65...Kc7 is no better in view of 66. Ra1!, and the king has to go to the b-file anyway) 66. g4 Rxb7

67. g5 Kc7 68. Kg4 Kd6 69. f4 Rh2 70. f5 d4 71. Rf1!, and the white passed pawns are too strong;

B) 63...Kd7! 64. Qa7+ Kc8 65. Kg1 e3! 66. fxe3 Qg6!, and White cannot win.

The fact that, in Variation B, the white king had to return to g1 clearly shows how unfortunate White's 61st move had been.

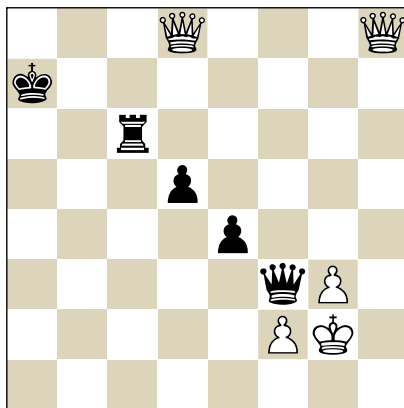
62. Qe7+ Kb6 63. Qd8+ Kb7 64. Qd7+ Kb6



65. Rxc6+!

After some checks White finally deals the deathblow.

65...Rxc6 66. Qd8+ Ka7 67. Qd7+ Kb6 68. Qd8+ Ka7 69. h8Q Qf3+

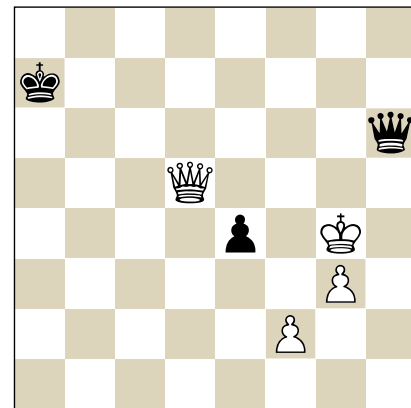


70. Kh3

McShane opts for liquidating to a winning queen ending.

With 70. Kh2 he could have won more quickly. After 70...Qxf2+ 71. Kh3 Qf1+ 72. Kh4 Qh1+ 73. Kg5 Qc1+ 74. Kf5 his king can safely march to the centre. But it is understandable that McShane did not want to calculate this variation, in which the white king ventures into the open. If you see a sound way to victory without complications, you should go for it.

70...Rh6+ 71. Qxh6 Qh1+ 72. Kg4 Qxh6 73. Qxd5

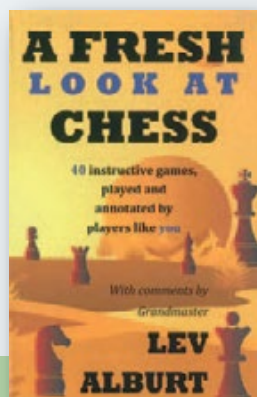


This is the position McShane had been aiming for. The black e-pawn will fall, after which the win will be elementary.

73...Qf6 74. Qf5 Qd4 75. Qf4 Kb7 76. Qf5 Qd5+ 77. Qe5 Qf7+ 78. Qf6 Qd5+ 79. Qf4 Qd2+ 80. Qxe4 Qe2+ 81. Qd5 Qa2+ 82. Qd6 Qa3+ 83. Qe6 Qa2+ 84. Qe7 Qe2+ 85. Qf7 Qh5+ 86. Qg7 Qg4+ 87. Qg6 Qd4+ 88. Qf6 Qg4+ 89. Qh6 Qe2 90. Qg5 Kc7 91. f4 Qf3 92. Qe5+ Qd7 93. f5 Qf1 94. f6

Black resigned. ■

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— Max Euwe



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Evgeny Tomashevsky

CURRENT ELO: 2733

DATE OF BIRTH: 1 July 1987

PLACE OF BIRTH: Engels, Saratov region, Russia

PLACE OF RESIDENCE: Saratov, Russia



What is your favourite colour?

Dark colours in the range of dark blue to black, but sometimes I prefer milder ones like green.

What kind of food makes you happy?

Mainly Russian, Ukrainian and Caucasian cuisine.

And what drink?

Lemonades and cocktails like mojito.

Who is your favourite author?

If I were to pick one my choice is Alexandre Dumas (father). Childhood emotions are strongest ☺, and his romantic heroes from French history impressed me a lot.

What is your all-time favourite movie?

Lord of the Rings in the humorous Russian translation made by 'Goblin'.

What music do you like to listen to?

Russian rock, disco of the 1980s, classical rock of the '70s and '80s, modern pop – different styles! I agree with the opinion that it's not the genres that are good or bad but the music ☺.

Do you have a favourite painter?

I'm not an expert on painting, but some great pictures impressed me a lot. E.g. the Sistine Madonna by Raffaello Santi. I also like the paintings of the masters of the Northern Renaissance: Albrecht Dürer, Pieter Brueghel etc.

Who is your favourite sportsman?

Roger Federer. There are plenty of great sportsmen, but the Swiss king of tennis, apart from everything else,

looks like the ideal of professionalism and sporting nobility.

And your favourite football player?

Hmm... How to choose between Pelé, Maradona, Messi and CriRo? I don't want to prefer one of these greats, so my choice is Zizou! ☺

What is your favourite football team?

'Spartak' Moscow forever!

What do you see as your best result ever?

By PR – victory in the European championship, Budva 2009; by quality of play – 2nd place in Saratov 2011; by difficulty – 6 times (from 6!) qualification to the Russian Super Final.

Who is your favourite chess player of all time?

I admire all the great chess players, but my favourite player must have the hypothetical combination of Capa's intuition, Alekhine's feeling of dynamics, Botvinnik's will, Tal's fantasy, Petrosian's feeling of danger, etc... Probably Fischer, Karpov and Kasparov are much closer to this ideal than anyone else.

Is there a chess book that had a profound influence on you?

I remember my first serious chess book, a biography of David Janowski by S. Voronkov and D. Plisetsky.

Do you have any superstitions concerning chess?

I think all players have at least some superstitions, but I try not to believe in them or believe only in the good of them ☺.

Do chess players have typical shortcomings?

No, I don't think so. We are completely different from each other and have individual sets of shortcomings ☺.

Which three people would you like to invite for dinner?

The three wisest men I know: GM Yury Razuvaev (my coach from 2007 till his untimely death in 2012), Dr. Vladimir Dines (the Rector of my university), Dr. Yury Tomashevsky (my father).

What is your greatest fear?

I'm not so brave, so I don't want to check only one of my multiple fears ☺.

If you could change one thing in the chess world, what would it be?

I would want to stop the short time-controls. Long classical games are our prestige trademark, and if we reject them in a chase for cheap attractiveness, we shall not win anything.

What nationality will the 2050 chess World Champion be?

I hope Russian. But will chess save its charm and prestige till that time?

Is a knowledge of chess useful in everyday life?

Definitely yes, but only up to the level at which chess hasn't become a profession yet. After this things are not so clear ☺.

What is the best thing that was ever said about chess?

'Chess is for people who want to make an intellectual effort, who have respect for the game.' – Boris Gelfand.

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